

Arafat condemns attack harshly

RAMALLAH (AP) — In a rare direct appeal to the Israeli public, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on Friday condemned a car bomb attack in a Jerusalem market and promised to track down those responsible. A sombre-looking and straight-talking Arafat broke away from an ongoing cabinet meeting to speak to Israel Television. "First of all, it must be clear that we condemn this act, this terrorist, criminal act whose intention was to hurt the peace process," Arafat said. "We must work together, (both) Israelis and Palestinians to confront these terrorist acts that aim to destroy the peace process." Arafat's condemnation was his strongest yet of such an attack, and his appearance on Israel Television's popular Friday evening newscast gave a sense of urgency to the feeling that the peace process is in grave danger.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية "الراي"

Lebanese minister heads to Baghdad

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanese Industry Minister Nadim Salem headed to Baghdad Friday to help launch talks aimed at sealing a trade agreement with Iraq, the official news agency NNA said. "Salem will assert the necessity of launching negotiations with Iraq to reach a trade accord between the two countries," the news agency said. "He will also seek to set up a Lebanese trade office in Baghdad ... and encourage the export of Lebanese products to Iraq through the Beirut port," it said. Salem was due to meet with the Iraqi ministers of industry, trade and health as well as with Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan during the two-day official visit which starts on Saturday. He was also due to inaugurate the Lebanese wing at the Baghdad International Trade Fair and preside over meetings between Iraqi and Lebanese industrialists to help increase bilateral trade exchanges.

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Car bomb explodes; Israel suspends ratification of Wye River peace accord

TEL AVIV (AP) — A car bomb blew up Friday in a Jerusalem market crowded with Israelis shopping for the Sabbath. The blast killed two assailants, wounded 21 Israelis and prompted Israel to suspend implementation of the peace accord with the Palestinians.

The Palestinian Resistance Movement, Hamas, which has been trying to sabotage the agreement, claimed responsibility for the 9:45 a.m. local time attack in the Mahane Yehuda market.

Palestinian officials condemned the attack, but accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of political blackmail for holding up the agreement that was to give the Palestinians another 13 per cent of the West Bank by the end of January.

In the attack, a red Fiat drove slowly toward the main intersection at the market entrance, smoke coming out of the hood and windows. "People started to shout 'car on fire,'" said Yair Cohen, a bus company employee.

Rahel Zaken, waiting in line at a bakery to buy Sabbath bread, turned toward the street and got a glimpse of the driver.

"I saw his eyes. He looked right at me," said Zaken, a 52-year-old secretary. Seconds later, an explosion shook the area.

"I fell to the ground and stumbled over one of the beggars and crawled away on my hands and legs," she said. She was hospitalized after complaining of ringing in the ears.

Others said they heard two explosions, followed by fast pops, like the sound of firecrackers. Israel radio said two suitcases filled with explosives were recovered near the car, suggesting the blast went off prematurely and that the assailants had planned to set off a more powerful explosion.

Friday's bombing marked the third time in less than three weeks that Hamas tried, but failed, to carry out an attack with large numbers of Israeli casualties, suggesting that a recent crackdown by Israel and the Palestinian National Authority has produced results.

A charred, dismembered corpse, covered by tires, lay several metres away. Streams of soot-black water ran in the street. Another bare-legged body lay in the street, face down, in a pool of blood below the head. Rescue workers covered the body with sodden pieces of cardboard box and plastic shopping bags.

Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said the two dead were the assailants. Asked about Hamas' apparent difficulty to launch a large-scale attack, he said: "We can't depend on miracles."

The explosion turned the car into a mass of twisted metal, and a large cloud of smoke engulfed the area.

"There was hysteria, people were running," said Eliahu Duan, an Israeli border policeman. Soldiers and police held back the crowds. "It's dangerous — stay back!" they shouted.

At police barricades set up along Jerusalem's busiest thoroughfare, soldiers and police held back crowds of people, some



Flames and smoke rise from a red Fiat car on Jaffa Street minutes after a suicide bomb attack on a central Jerusalem market on Friday morning (Reuters photo)

Israeli cabinet backtracks on Jabal Abu Ghneim settlement

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel backtracked on an announcement Friday that building would begin immediately on a Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem amid reports that plans to go ahead with construction had led to a rift among Israeli leaders.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's spokesman Aviv Bushinsky denied that Israel would soon begin construction on the Jabal Abu Ghneim settlement in occupied Jerusalem where a groundbreaking ceremony in March 1997 led to a 19-month impasse in Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations.

"Our position in principle is known, and Netanyahu

recalled it recently: the Jewish homes planned for Har Homa (Jewish name for Jabal Abu Ghneim) will be built before 2000 but at the moment no decision has been made concerning this work," Bushinsky said.

"When will construction begin? For the moment we don't know," he said.

But another Netanyahu spokesman said earlier that the government would begin inviting bids for construction work at the settlement on Sunday.

Israeli public radio reported that the government had indeed decided to begin soliciting tenders for the work, but that the announcement was to have been kept secret at least

until the Israeli cabinet approves the Wye River peace accord with the Palestinians.

The inadvertent early release of the plan sparked a rift between Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who is vehemently opposed to the move, the radio said.

The Wye River agreement calls on both parties to abstain from "unilateral actions" such as settlement expansion, and word of Israel's Har Homa plans brought swift condemnation from Palestinian authorities.

Any construction there would be a "dangerous violation of the Wye agreement and will have dangerous consequences," said Nabil Abu

Rudeina, a spokesman for Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

The first Israeli announcement to press ahead with the Jabal Abu Ghneim plans came after a decision to halt cabinet debate on the Wye River agreement following a bomb attack in a Jerusalem market that left the two bombers dead and wounded 21 people.

Another Arafat spokesman, Ahmad Tibi, said the Israeli decision was "a particularly provocative exploitation of a terrorist attack," and Palestinian officials asked the United States to intervene to ensure swift implementation of the Wye River agreement, which had been due to take effect Monday.

Clinton urges Israel to go through deal

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bill Clinton urged Israel to go through with a land-for-security deal with the Palestinians despite a car-bomb explosion in a Jerusalem market. He called the accord "the only answer to today's act of criminal terror."

Appealing for prayers for the 21 injured shoppers and passersby, Clinton said Friday the agreement he helped mediate last month is "the best way to safety for the Israelis, the best way to achieve the aspirations of the Palestinians."

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, echoing Clinton's assertions, also said the Wye River accord would advance Palestinian "aspira-

tions" and make Israel more secure.

"The Palestinians should work on fighting terror every hour of every day," Albright said at a joint news conference with Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini at the State Department.

Dini said the agreement was "especially important for the Palestinian side" and that European foreign ministers would meet next week to consider economic assistance to Arafat's Palestinian National Authority.

The Italian official also expressed disappointment that Israel had not provided Arafat and the Palestinians with an airport in Gaza and a seaport.

After the bombing, Albright telephoned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to express her condolences and then called for quick approval of the agreement.

"It is customary for there to be a short pause in the wake of this kind of attack," Albright said, noting also the onset of the Sabbath.

But, she said, "it is important for the Israeli cabinet to resume its deliberations quickly. I believe, based on my conversations with the prime minister, that he wants to find a way to do this."

Clinton deplored the violence and prodded Israel to go on with the agreement in a speech at Central High School

in Little Rock, Ark.

"No nation should live under the threat of violence and terror that they live under every day," Clinton said of the Israeli people.

The White House also issued a statement in which Clinton said, "Hillary's and my deepest sympathies go out to the victims and families of this outrageous and cowardly act by enemies of peace who wish to derail the courageous steps taken by the Israelis and Palestinians at Wye River."

The statement quoted Clinton as adding: "I hope we can regain the momentum and implementation of the Wye agreement as soon as possible."

King reassures Senate members of his good health

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein has sent a cable to Senate Speaker Zeid Rifai thanking him for his earlier cable enquiring about his health. The King reassured Rifai and the members of the Senate that he is in good health.

In the cable, King Hussein expressed his deep pride in the senators and their allegiance to the Throne noting that they have always displayed their affection towards their Monarch.

King Hussein referred to the Middle East peace, saying that Jordan has always sought to attain a comprehensive peace for the benefit of the people of the region and their future generations.

He said his participation in the Wye River negotiations which ended with the signing of an accord by the Palestinians and the Israelis was "an expression of our belief in the need to support the Palestinian brothers in their struggle to regain their legitimate rights on their national soil and a responsi-

ble attempt to back international efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace that would create an atmosphere marked by stability and security which guarantees the rights of all peoples and restores all parties' rights so that the future generations can enjoy peace that has been lacking for decades."

HRH Prince Abdullah said that King Hussein will return to Jordan very soon, according to an Al Ra'i Arabic daily report on Friday.

The paper quoted Prince Abdullah as making the statement before chairing a meeting of the board of directors of the Jordan Football Association.

The Prince made the announcement in a press statement distributed by Mohammad Hamdan, the federation's secretary general.

The statement said the King's response to the chemotherapy has shortened the duration of the treatment adding that the Monarch will return to Jordan fully cured very soon.

Also on Thursday King Hussein received a telephone call from U.S. President Bill Clinton who inquired about the King's health and the progress of his chemotherapy treatment.

Meanwhile at a meeting at the Upper House of Parliament, Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh told the Senate that tests on the King showed that he is free of any form of cancer and that the treatment was progressing as planned.

Tarawneh told the Senate Thursday that King Hussein was improving progressively and his condition gives cause for deep satisfaction.

At the meeting, which was attended by several ministers, Tarawneh said his government was keen on maintaining and strengthening relations between the executive and legislative authorities.

He also briefed the Senate on the latest developments in the peace process reiterating Jordan's readiness to pursue support for the Palestinian people.

Jazirah TV's attack on Jordan continues to draw strong condemnation

AMMAN (Petra) — The overall leader of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood movement in Amman, Sadruddin Baianuni, said the Brotherhood members are pained to see falsehoods being fabricated against Jordan through the Al Jazirah television.

Commenting on the content of last Tuesday's Al Itijah Al Mu'akass programme aired by the Qatar-based station, Baianuni charged that this is part of an ongoing Syrian campaign directed against Jordan, noting that the Syrian regime's hostile attack on Jordan cannot be tolerated.

Jordan on Wednesday shut down the Al Jazirah offices in Amman citing violations of the Press and Publications Law committed by the station. Tuesday's programme on Al Jazirah, originally set to discuss the fourth anniversary of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, turned into what Jordanian viewers considered "a Jordan bashing."

Baianuni said the Syrian regime seems to forget its human rights violations in Syria where, he said, it is abusing freedoms and human rights.

Noting that the Syrian people are continually facing repression, Baianuni said that no person in Syria can

express his feelings freely without facing persecution at the hands of the ruling Alawite regime which represents only 10 per cent of the Syrian people ruling Syria by force.

Meanwhile, the slanderous attack on Jordan has drawn strong condemnation from the Qatari media and journalists from the Arab World.

Al Watan daily of Doha said Faisal Al Qassem, the anchorman who presents the weekly Al Itijah Al Mu'akass (the opposite direction), has been purposely launching hostile campaigns against Jordan in a bid to harm Qatari-Jordanian relations.

"Qassem has through this weekly and earlier programmes persisted in leveling hostile campaigns at the Kingdom and its leadership in a very irresponsible and defiant manner," said the daily. It noted that Qassem does not deserve the honour to be affiliated to the Al Jazirah television station as he has persistently crossed the red line and abused the margin of freedom of the media, totally disrespecting inter-Arab and international relations.

Al Rayah, another Qatari daily, said that through this programme, Qassem has

tried to poison relations among Arab countries and has clearly proved his ill intention through the campaigns directed at Jordan and therefore he proved to be incapable of honouring the trust he was given.

Appearing on Tuesday's programme were former Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber and Syrian researcher Mohammad Khalifah. On the programme, Khalifah accused Jordan of conspiring with Israel since its foundation in 1948 against the Arab Nation and claimed that the Jordan Armed Forces had surrendered Palestinian land to the Israelis.

In reacting to Qassem's programme last Tuesday nearly 60 employees working for Al Jazirah television station from Jordan, Egypt, Sudan, Palestine and Lebanon have demanded prompt action be taken by the station's management to put an end to Qassem's irresponsible behaviour.

These employees accused Qassem of creating enmity and hatred among the Arab countries through his programme and they threatened to quit their jobs if Qassem is permitted to present such suspect programmes.

Iraq rejects Security Council call to resume cooperation with UNSCOM

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq rejected on Friday a U.N. Security Council demand that it immediately resume cooperation with U.N. arms inspectors and dismissed the possible use of military force by the United States to make it comply.

"Iraq will not go back on its decision to cut off cooperation with the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) unless its legitimate demand for a lifting of the embargo is satisfied," said Abdul Ghani Abdul Ghafour, a leader of the ruling Baath Party.

Abdul Ghafour, in the first Iraqi reaction to Thursday's U.N. Security Council resolution, also lashed out at the

United States and Britain and said Baghdad would not bow to threats of military force.

"The United States and Britain imposed a new resolution against the international will with the aim of causing harm to the Iraqi people and prolonging the embargo," the official INA news agency quoted him as saying.

"American threats will not weaken the will of our people to preserve the dignity and sovereignty of Iraq under the leadership of President Saddam Hussein," Abdul Ghafour told a conference of Arab students here.

The Iraqi official also reiterated Iraq's claim that it has complied with all U.N. disarmament resolutions and called for the lifting of the sanctions imposed for his country's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"The U.N. and permanent members of the Security Council bear responsibility for ensuring respect for the U.N. Charter and defending against American-British arrogance by working to lift the embargo," he said.

Abdul Ghafour also renewed Iraqi charges that the UNSCOM overseeing Iraq's disarmament "was spying on Iraq" on behalf of the Central Intelligence Agency and Israel's Mossad secret service. Iraq has refused to renew cooperation with UNSCOM until its chairman, Richard

Butler of Australia is sacked, and the commission restructured.

In Resolution 1205, the U.N. Security Council on Thursday unanimously ordered Baghdad to "rescind immediately and unconditionally" its Oct. 31 decision to stop cooperation with U.N. weapons inspectors.

But it stopped short of threatening military action if Baghdad refused.

The council is also demanding that Iraq rescind its Aug. 5 decision which scaled back cooperation with UNSCOM and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

But statements by the five permanent members during

the open session highlighted a continuing council split, with Britain and the United States raising the possibility of military strikes.

Russia warned that military action would have "highly unpredictable and dangerous" consequences, and could backfire against the U.N. monitoring system aimed at ensuring that Iraq does not reactivate weapons of mass destruction programmes.

China, France and Russia also revived an argument with Britain and the United States by calling for a clear timetable leading to the lifting of sanctions, as demanded by Iraq.

U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen was in Turkey

on Friday on the latest leg of a tour of U.S. allies to discuss the latest crisis with Iraq.

The Pentagon chief held talks over the past few days in Gulf states, Egypt and Jordan, where he was told that a diplomatic solution should be found to the conflict. Iraq's official press said Baghdad was ready for a military confrontation to "assert its rights" but wants a peaceful solution to the crisis.

"We are ready for confrontation. If our enemies have their plans, we have ours, our millions [of volunteers] will resume arms training," said Al Thawra, mouthpiece of the Baath Party.

"We are not saying that we are seeking an escalation, but

responding to the language of menace adopted by the United States which thinks it can pressure Iraq to renounce its rights and accept that the injustice will continue indefinitely," Al Thawra said.

"Iraq is only claiming its legitimate rights, and it is encouraging peaceful efforts to resolve the conflict," it said.

At Friday prayers, imams at Baghdad's mosques also made their weekly request on behalf of President Saddam.

"God, come to the assistance of Saddam Hussein and grant him victory," urged Sheikh Baqr Sarraim of the Al Ghailani Mosque in central Baghdad.

(Continued on page 3)

هكذا من الله

No long-term effect on troops from Kuwait oil fires, Pentagon says

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. troops exposed to the oil fires that raged in Kuwait during the 1991 Gulf war coughed up black mucus and reported skin rashes and shortness of breath.

But a Pentagon report released Thursday found that the concentration of contaminants was too low to cause long-term harm to the health of soldiers exposed to smoke from the fires.

"Even under a very conservative exposure scenario that assumed all troops in the KTO [Kuwait Theatre of Operations] were exposed for an extended period to the concentrations observed, the cumulative dose of contaminants, except particulate matter, fell below the levels known to cause health effects," the report said.

However, the report did find that particulates in the Kuwait air — inhalable bits of sand and grit — exceeded U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards and could exacerbate pre-existing respiratory problems like asthma.

Over 600 Kuwaiti oil wells were set ablaze by the Iraqis beginning in January, 1991, sending up columns of sooty smoke that blackened the skies over the region until they were brought under control nine months later.

"At the time of the destruction, the medical and environmental community feared that exposure to the fires would result in catastrophic acute and chronic health effects," the report said.

"However, the high combustion efficiency of the fires, the nature and amount of contaminants in the smoke, the lofting effect created by solar heating, and the local wind and weather conditions combined to reduce the impact of the fires on military and civilian populations," the report said.

Some veterans of the war associated respiratory problems they were having to exposure to the oil fires, and reported short-term symptoms such as shortness of breath, skin rashes, eye and throat irritation and oil-blackened mucus.

The Pentagon study reached its conclusions without having health screenings, medical evaluations and diagnoses of the exposed soldiers.

But firefighters who deployed to Kuwait and who experienced longer and more severe exposures to the oil fires were screened.

"These studies indicate that these firefighters are generally in good health and have not experienced any of the symptoms reported by the troops," the Pentagon report said.

A Rand Corporation review of the existing scientific literature on the health effects of oil fires concluded that the concentrations of contaminants in Kuwait were "much lower than the levels that are currently known to cause short and long-term health effects," the report said.

U.S. army studies assessed the risk of cancers and non-cancers to the exposed troops as below the level at which the diseases typically occur in a normal population, the report said.

peace accord was "unjustified and misplaced," particularly as "the international community unanimously blames Israel for blocking the peace process."

The Israeli cabinet stopped debate on the Wye River agreement following a bomb attack in occupied Jerusalem that killed two people and left 21 wounded.

Syria condemns U.S.-Israel security memorandum

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria denounced Friday a U.S.-Israeli security memorandum pledging Washington's help in defending Israel against regional attacks, saying the pact was intended to strengthen the Jewish state's role in the Middle East.

"The American administration is more determined than ever to stand by Israel's side instead of supporting the establishment of peace," said the Al Thawra newspaper, official mouthpiece of the ruling Baath Party.

The United States is trying to "guarantee Israeli military superiority in the region" by its readiness to "intervene militarily in case of an attack against Israel," it said.

Israel and the United States signed the security

memorandum Saturday, under which Washington will view "with the utmost seriousness any threat to the security of the state of Israel from long- or medium-range missiles."

In the event of such a threat, Washington will offer Israel "diplomatic and other support."

Al Thawra added that the United States call for Arabs to support the Wye River

peace accord was "unjustified and misplaced," particularly as "the international community unanimously blames Israel for blocking the peace process."

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LEFT BEHIND: U.N. Norwegian soldier Skjelstad on Friday embraces his cat before leaving his base in the Israeli-occupied border zone of southern Lebanon. The soldier, who had picked up the cat from the streets few years ago, expressed sadness at having to leave the cat behind in embattled southern Lebanon. Indian peacekeepers will replace Norway's battalion in the United Nations Interim Forces (UNIFIL) in south Lebanon (AFP photo)

U.N. official resumes shuttle on Cyprus

NICOSIA (AFP) — U.N. Representative Ann Hercus resumed her shuttle between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots on Friday in a meeting here with Cypriot President Glafcos Clerides.

Hercus met with Clerides, a Greek Cypriot, for 45 minutes to try to relaunch inter-communal talks on the divided eastern Mediterranean island, the official Cyprus News Agency (CNA) said.

The U.N. resident representative told reporters afterward that she will meet next Wednesday with Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş, who heads the breakaway Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC).

The New Zealander, who began her shuttle efforts last month, said she will also meet Clerides again next week, CNA said.

Direct Clerides-Denktaş talks have been in an impasse for more than a year, with Denktaş demanding international recognition for the TRNC as a condition for resuming negotiations.

The situation was aggravated by the internationally recognised Republic of Cyprus' purchase of Russian ground-to-air missiles, which Turkey has threatened to knock out if they are deployed on the island.

Turkish police chief to demand extradition of Islamist from Germany

BONN (AFP) — The extradition of an Islamist militant sought by Ankara for allegedly masterminding a suicide attack plot will figure prominently in a visit to Germany next week by the head of security for the Turkish police.

Necati Bilican arrives in Germany Tuesday on a five-day visit at the invitation of the head of the German federal criminal police (BKA), Ulrich Kersten, the BKA said Thursday.

The visit repays one to Ankara a year ago by Kersten's deputy, Bernhard Falk, but it coincides with efforts by Turkey to secure the extradition of Metin Kaplan, head of the Cologne-based Federation of Islamic Associations and Communities (ICCB).

Turkish authorities on Monday said they had uncovered a plot by the ICCB to stage a kamikaze-style airborne suicide attack on the tomb of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey.

The attack was allegedly originally timed to coincide with festivities marking Turkey's 75th anniversary last

week, but then postponed to the 60th anniversary of Atatürk's death on Nov. 10 due to poor weather conditions.

Twenty-three people arrested in Istanbul last week on charges of planning suicide attacks on Kaplan's orders were being tried at the state security court in Istanbul on Thursday for setting up an armed group.

Germany said Thursday it had widened its probe into Kaplan, who was being investigated for forming a terrorist group which punished renegades by death, to cover the preparation of attacks in Turkey.

No arrest warrant has yet been issued for Kaplan and other members of his group, but documents provided by Turkish authorities back up suspicions that the organisation planned attacks against public buildings in Turkey from Germany, the public prosecutor's office said Thursday.

The ICCB was founded in 1984 in Cologne with the objective of overturning the Turkish government in favour of an Islamic regime. The prosecutors' office said members who defected had been threatened with death and one had been killed.

German authorities, who also want to question Kaplan about his political activities conflicting with the conditions of his residence in Cologne, have said the organisation is increasingly losing touch with reality.

Kaplan, who has declared himself "caliph and successor of the prophet," replaced his late father, Cemalettin Kaplan, as head of the network in 1995.

He was questioned in connection with the death of a rival "caliph" last year.

The BKA said Bilican would discuss cooperation in fighting drug trafficking as well as terrorism, while Turkish Interior Minister Kulu Atlas said he would be raising Kaplan's extradition.

The latest developments came after Kaplan said in a telephone interview with Cologne broadcast late Wednesday he and his followers declared a jihad [Muslim holy war].

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Palestinian on Israel's wanted list claims innocence

BETHLEHEM (AP) — Khader Abu Abra is a father of three boys with a college degree in education. He wears finely tailored suits and speaks three languages.

He is also on Israel's most-wanted list.

Israel believes the 40-year-old is a leading figure in a radical PLO faction and ordered the 1995 killing of two Israeli hikers. If he isn't arrested by Yasser Arafat's security forces, Israel will not go ahead with the new Mideast accord and withdraw its troops from more of the West Bank.

Abu Abra's name is on a list of 30 Palestinians Israel wants arrested over the next three months. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's aides

say it's simply a matter of rounding up people responsible for the deaths of nearly 100 Israelis.

But the demand — which held up implementation of the peace accord for several days this week — is not as straightforward as that.

Abu Abra says he is innocent and ended up on the list only because of unsubstantiated accusations by a Palestinian acquaintance.

Another of the alleged fugitives has been in Israeli custody for a year, according to Palestinian security officials, and 14 others have been in the custody of Arafat's security forces all along.

Abu Abra is accused of ordering the killing of two

Israeli hikers in 1995 and participating in a grenade attack on an Israeli-Palestinian joint patrol near Bethlehem in 1996.

The only evidence Israel has against him, Abu Abra maintains, is the testimony of another Palestinian man who was arrested by Israel soon after the killings and who implicated Abu Abra in exchange for his own release.

"I am innocent," Abu Abra said Thursday, sitting in an office in the West Bank city of Bethlehem, where he is the director of an aid group that assists Palestinian children.

"Israel needs to seriously re-evaluate this list."

Israel has issued several versions of its most-wanted list,

including one roster that contained the names of dead fugitives such as Hamas bomb-maker Mohieddine Sharif.

But the list does not include suspected Hamas bomb-maker Mohamad Deif, even though Netanyahu has insisted Deif be arrested as part of the deal.

Netanyahu said Thursday he has received guarantees that all the men on the list would be arrested.

"We received the necessary assurances from the United States... that the [Palestinian security forces] would arrest all 30," Netanyahu said. "It was also promised to us that there would be no revolving door" and the suspects would remain in custody until they

are put on trial.

But Wadia Shadid, another man on the list, who sells cars parts in the West Bank city of Tulkarem, says he will shoot anyone who tries to arrest him. A former member of the Fatah Hawks, a vigilante group active during the Palestinian uprising, Shadid is wanted by Israel for killing his uncle in 1993, a suspected informer for the Israelis.

Dalia Kerstein, director of the Israeli human rights group Hamoked, said the Israeli demand to arrest the 30 men invites the potential for human rights abuses, including unfair trials, coerced confessions and abusive treatment while they are in custody.

Three questioned over Saudi diplomat's murder were religious police

SYDNEY (AFP) — Three men questioned over the murder of a Saudi diplomat in Australia were connected to the Saudi religious sharia police, a report said Friday, deepening the mystery surrounding the brutal slaying.

The trio, holding diplomatic passports, were held and searched by customs at Sydney airport five days after Abdullah

Al Ghamdi, the Saudi embassy's first secretary, was found with his throat slit in his Canberra home in October.

They arrived on private passports days before Al Ghamdi's death.

The Melbourne Age, quoting well-placed sources, said the three were allowed to leave with the official endorsement of the Saudi embassy and

the Australian Federal Police.

"The bottom line is that custom people stopped these men and then were told to let them go. So they were searched, questioned and let go," the source said.

"Of course they were travelling on diplomatic passports so they were entitled to be let go but you have to ask if that was necessarily the right thing to do after

they entered as regular Saudis."

Police are investigating the circles in which Al Ghamdi had worked or socialised — including Canberra's brothel and bar scene where he was known as a heavy drinker — and his diplomatic connections with other Middle Eastern or Islamic communities in the area.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19
PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 Cartoon — Animaniacs
15:30 Clowns — Clowns
16:00 Drama — Neighbours
16:30 Doc — Fear Pressure
17:00 French Programme — "Faut Pas Réver"
18:00 Drama — Wind at My Back
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 French Programme — "Lo'uf de Colomb"
19:30 News headlines
19:35 Murphy Brown
20:00 Today's Health
20:30 Siens
21:05 Drama — ABC of Democracy
21:30 Making Master Pieces
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film — "Die Hard 2"
23:59 Twisted
00:30 End of T.V.

PRAYER TIMES

04:38 Fajr
05:52 (Sunrise) Duha
11:19 Dhuhur
14:20 Asr
16:46 Maghreb
18:05 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel.

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German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 5811295
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Day Saints Tel. 4654932
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Salle College Tel. 5661757
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Evangelical Free Church Tel.
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The Baptist Church Tel.
4628052
The Armenian Catholic
Church Tel. 4771331
The Armenian Orthodox
Church Tel. 4775261

Moderate to relative warm
weather conditions will prevail
with clouds appearing at different
altitudes, temperatures
higher than average by six
degrees centigrade, and winds
southeasterly moderate to
active. In Amman, it will moderate
to relatively warm, winds
northerly moderate, and seas
calm.
Min/Max. temp.
Amman 14/28
Agaba 18/31
Deserts 12/31
Jordan Valley 17/32

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 28 Agaba 30. Humidity
readings: Amman 23 per cent.
Agaba 50 per cent.
Following are the highest temperatures
expected today in the
following areas:
Ajloun 25
Jerash 30
Um Qays 30
Madaba 28
Petra 29
Dead Sea 33

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Bassam Karadshah 4389200

Dr. Khalid M'addi 5661144
Dr. Salim Dababshi 5812568
Dr. Rami Mazzawi 4894788
AMMAN:
Firas Pharmacy 5661912
Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730
Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004
Rukn Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169
IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'ammeh (02)989601
Fou'ad Pharmacy (02)275360
ZARQA:
Dr. Samir Al Lawzi (09)989601
Palestine Pharmacy (09)983562

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue
..... 4630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 4621111 4637777
Fire Brigade 4617101
Blood Bank 4775121
Highway Police 5343402
Traffic Police 4896390
Public Security Dept. 4630321
Hotel Complaints 5605800
Price Complaints 5661176
Water & Sewage Complaints 4897467
Amman Municipality Complaints
..... 7871111
Telephone Information (directory
assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 0132
Central Amman Telephone

Repairs 4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101
Jordan Television 4773111
Radio Jordan 4774111
Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Electric Power Co. 4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 44-53300

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special
Surgery 5921199
The Islamic Abdi 5666137
Hussein Medical Centre 5856856
Luzmila 4630195
Khalidi Maternity 4642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 462362
Malhas, J. Amman 4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071
Shmeisani Hospital 5607431
Jordan Hospital 5607550
University Hospital 5353444
Al-Muasher Hospital 5667279
Al-Ahli, Abdali 56641646
Italian Al-Muhajreen 4771101/3
Al-Bashir 477511126
Army, Marka 4891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital 5157100
Amal Hospital 5607155
Al Amal Cancer Centre 5353000

ZARQA National Hospital
..... (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986731
Al Hikma Modern Hospital
..... (09)990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital
..... (02)275555
Roman Catholic Hospital
..... (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital
..... (02) 7101372, (02) 7103101
Rosary Sisters Hospital
..... (02) 7102831, (02) 7102011
Specialty Hospital (02) 7103100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital
(03)2014111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT

This information is supplied by
Royal Jordanian (RJ) information
department at the Queen Alia
International Airport Tel.
(44)53200 where it should always
be verified. Information on other
flights is obtained on telephone
(44) 52700 or (44) 523250. Information
on Royal Wings flights can
be supplied on phone 4875201-S.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:50 Tehran (RJ)
08:30 Damascus (RJ)
08:30 Agaba (add) (RJ)
09:30 New Delhi (RJ)
09:55 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:35 Colombo (RJ)
13:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:20 Cairo (RJ)
17:40 London, Berlin (RJ)
19:40 Frankfurt (RJ)
21:10 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
22:45 Paris (RJ)
22:50 Larnaca (RJ)
05:15 Bangkok (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:00 Agaba (add) (RJ)
06:30 Beirut (RJ)
10:15 Frankfurt (RJ)
11:15 Rome (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00 Brussels (RJ)
12:00 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:10 Paris (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
12:30 Cairo (RJ)
19:35 Larnaca (RJ)
20:00 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:15 Bombay (RJ)
21:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
23:15 Jeddah (RJ)
05:35 Agaba (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

13:05 Vienna (OS)
13:15 Riyadh (SV)
13:20 Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
14:05 Rome (AZ)
18:00 Dubai, Damascus (EK)
18:40 Beirut (ME)
19:05 Paris (AF)
19:15 Frankfurt (LH)
21:35 Cairo (MS)
22:55 London, Damascus (BA)
23:35 Amsterdam (KL)
01:00 Belgrade (JU)

Royal Wings (RW)

08:00 Agaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
09:30 Agaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
21:30 Agaba (from QAIA) (RW)

دردینا لیسو



HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, speaks with U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen, who visited Jordan as part of a regional tour (Photo by Boghos)

During meeting with U.S. Defence Secretary Cohen Crown Prince calls for diplomatic solution to U.N.-Iraq standoff

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Thursday called for a diplomatic solution to the present U.N.-Iraq crisis and the development of a process that would lead to the resumption of cooperation between the two sides within the frame-

work of international legitimacy.

Speaking at a meeting with U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen during his brief visit to Jordan, the Regent said such steps can lead to the end of the Iraqi people's suffering.

Prince Hassan underlined the need for saving

the region from further confrontations and for the settlement of the crisis through peaceful means based on international legitimacy.

Cohen, who left Amman on Friday for Turkey, arrived in the Kingdom on a tour that has included Egypt, where he met with

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, and Arab Gulf states.

Present at the Regent's meeting with Cohen were Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, Royal Court Chief Jawad Anani, Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib and Information Minister Nasser Judeh.

Young actress, singer continues setting sights high

By Jean-Claude Elias

AMMAN — Her natural talent, her passion for acting and performing were discovered when she was only 10. Rania Kurdi was then participating in children's plays such as "Oliver and Annie" when director Vanessa Batrouni noticed her.

The rest was bound to happen. She went to England in the late 1980s, encouraged by open-minded and supportive parents, to study drama, acting and singing. She returned to Jordan after about eight years.

The talent of Kurdi has already, and in less than a year, allowed her to accomplish much. She performed with the celebrated theatre group of Hisham Yanes for several months, sang in music concerts, played with local musicians, co-starred in the prime time local television series "Laylat Min Al Umr," broadcast on JTV Channel One, shot a video clip, "Zgurt," with the popular "Abu Yusef" and produced a television show on child labour for the UNICEF day, "Tune Into Kids." A

talk show of her own is now under preparation.

The song "Sweet Innocence" that she wrote for Tune Into Kids has already been played several times on JTV, as has the video clip Zgurt, which can also be heard on Radio Jordan and has become a hit among young Jordanians.

Kurdi possesses a voice that is expressive and powerful. It allows her to interpret meaningful songs covering a wide range, from blues to country to pop. She likes songs with lyrics that convey a message of power, determination and strong will. She can easily move from sweet, charming music to highly energetic, almost aggressive, numbers.

Although she started to play the guitar only recently, Kurdi explained that she does not think of separating the two. Not only are these not different arts, she said but also they complement each other.

Talent, hard work, patience and a bit of luck remain indispensable ingredients for success, and Kurdi seems all set for the venture.



Rania Kurdi

whether she considered herself a singer or an actor, Kurdi explained that she does not think of separating the two. Not only are these not different arts, she said but also they complement each other.

Talent, hard work, patience and a bit of luck remain indispensable ingredients for success, and Kurdi seems all set for the venture.

Visiting Czech parliamentary delegation, NHF director discuss development

AMMAN (J.T.) — A delegation of senators from the Czech Republic on Thursday visited the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF), where they were briefed by NHF Executive Director Sima Bahous on the foundation's role in the development process in Jordan, an NHF statement said.

Bahous highlighted the NHF's strategy in supporting government efforts to curb poverty and unemployment and in introduc-

ing innovative, dynamic development initiatives.

The head of the Czech delegation, Frantisek Vizek, commended the achievements and the efforts of the NHF in its endeavours to improve the standards of living of the Jordanian people through sustainable development programmes.

"The emphasis on human beings, respecting their productivity and involving them as partners in the development process are

quite remarkable," he added.

Vizek concluded that the NHF's experience in development exceeds similar initiatives in many European countries.

The Czech senators also commended the work of the Jordan Design and Trade Centre, the marketing outlet for all NHF income-generating enterprises, benefiting thousands of families and communities across Jordan, the statement said.

Car bomb explodes; Israel suspends ratification of accord

(Continued from page 1)

frantic about loved ones who had been shopping in the crowded market only hours before the start of the Sabbath.

"Please, please, is there a girl with red hair who is hurt?" an older woman said tearfully, trying to push her way past police. A young female soldier patted her arm consolingly.

Two policemen led away an elderly woman who gripped a blue plastic shopping bag filled with groceries.

A small crowd of protesters shouted, "Death to Arabs! Death to Arafat!" Police tried to grab one of them, but he escaped into

the crowd.

Just a block away from Friday's blast, shoppers went about their business. "We can't stop with what we are doing when this happens," one young female shopper said.

In July 1997, two Islamists blew themselves up just a few metres from the site of the latest explosion, killing themselves and 16 shoppers.

When Friday's blast rocked downtown Jerusalem, the Israeli cabinet had just gathered about a kilometre away, at Netanyahu's office, to discuss the peace agreement under which Israel is to withdraw from 13 per cent of the West Bank in exchange for a Palestinian

campaign against Islamists.

The agreement cannot be implemented until it is ratified by the cabinet. Netanyahu adviser David Bar-Ilan said at the start of the session that he had expected a vote later Friday.

However, the session broke off when word of the attack reached the ministers. The meeting was resumed shortly after noon, with ministers deciding to suspend the ratification process.

The cabinet said in a statement it will only reconvene after "it verifies that the Palestinian Authority takes vigorous steps for an all-out war against terrorist organiza-

Tarawneh, Abbas meet over delay in implementation of Wye accord

AMMAN (J.T.) — The secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Mahmoud Abbas, Thursday briefed Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh on the latest developments in the peace process and the circumstances that led to a delay in the implementation of the Wye River accord.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Abbas said the Israelis are demanding that the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) hand over 30 Palestinians wanted for the killing or attempted killing of Israelis, a demand which

he said cannot be met because the Wye River accord brought an end to all outstanding security issues between the Palestinians and Israelis.

The Palestinians cannot accept any new demands unrelated to the accord, he added.

Referring to the PNA's relations with Hamas, Abbas said the authority considers Hamas as an opposition movement within the framework of democracy and accepts its political views through diplomatic channels but cannot tolerate any military action on the movement's

part. Regarding Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's position on the accord, Abbas said: "We can only wait and see whether he is committed to it and we hope that the agreement will be implemented, as there is no other way to achieve peace without this accord."

Asked if the Palestinians have asked Jordan to intervene and speed up the agreement's implementation, the PLO official replied that "we are always coordinating our stand with Jordan. We do not have to ask them to intervene

because the Jordanian brothers consider themselves responsible for the peace cause."

On final status negotiations, Abbas said that they will be difficult but that the interim questions must be dealt with at the moment.

Tarawneh was reported to have reiterated Jordan's full backing for the Palestinian people's struggle to regain their legitimate rights and establish an independent state on Palestinian soil.

Tarawneh said Jordan is keen on seeing that all measures are taken to achieve a lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

In closing arguments of mass murder trial Prosecutor describes Qashash as 'heinous killer,' asks for full conviction

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The criminal prosecutor in the case of Sa'eed Qashash, the 19-year-old student accused of murdering 12 people in June, Thursday described the defendant as "a heinous killer" and asked for a full conviction on all charges.

Qashash reportedly confessed on June 11 to the mass murder of 11 of his family members and a childhood friend because they were harassing him about his academic performance.

"It was clear from the evidence and the witness-

es' testimonies that Sa'eed Qashash plotted to murder these innocent people in a horrendous manner," Criminal Prosecutor Majed Azzab told the court in his 15-page closing argument.

The prosecutor also referred to the defendant's own testimony before the authorities, "which he gave willingly and which matched that of the prosecution witnesses."

Last month, Qashash retracted his previous confessions on June 11, one day after the discovery of the bodies, and claimed in court that four other people were the actual killers. He testified that the four

were searching for computer diskettes which belonged to his older brother and that when he tried to prevent them using his gun, they overpowered him, drugged him then shot and killed his entire family.

According to court documents, the defendant, who had already failed his tawjihi examinations once, expected to fail again and plotted to kill his family who were pressuring him about his academic performance.

On June 10, the defendant lured his family members one after the other to the basement of their home

and shot each of them once in the back of the head, the court said. He then allegedly piled their bodies on top of each other and sealed the basement entrance with bricks and cement.

None of the victims' relatives dropped charges against the defendant. If convicted of premeditated murder, Qashash could face the death penalty.

The court, comprising Justices Mohammed Ajameh, Mifleh Mubaidin and Issa Hamdan, adjourned the trial until Nov. 12 to hear the defence's closing arguments.

Art movement continues growth despite internal obstacles

By Munther Murjan

AMMAN — In spite of many obstacles, the art movement in Jordan has managed over the years to grow and expand slowly but surely. Artists however, are divided over the efficiency of academic preparation, the actual number of professional artists, art appreciation in general, the effect of foreign artists on the movement, the size of the art market and the quality of critique.

"The number of artists in Jordan is growing gradually," said Ahmad Razem, assistant manager at the Jordanian National Gallery of Fine Arts.

"But most graduate lacking practical training at professional studios," he added.

That is why Maha Abu Ayash, a graduate of the Chicago School of Arts, decided to open an art centre — to try and help create a professional level in art.

"I am trying to introduce some positive impulses into the world of creative art through this centre," she added.

As in any artistic community, there is internal debate over who really is an artist.

According to Ahmad Abu Shawesh, himself a Jordanian artist, "many people who call themselves artists lack the required knowledge and skill."

Another problem, is the "audience or viewers," said Abu Shawesh. Most of the time the audience is unaware of the value of a work or the amount and degree of professionalism that has gone into its creation.

Razem sees solutions to such problems in the education of the younger generation and in introducing them to art at an early age.

"We have already started a programme of field visits to the gallery in cooperation with the Ministry of Education... We hope that by the time these youth grow up, we will have adequate numbers of people who appreciate art," Razem said.

Since its beginning, the art movement in Jordan has been influenced by the talents of neighbouring Arab and Islamic states.

In the last six years, following the Gulf war, there has been an influx of Iraqi artists to the country. This development has met with mixed reactions.

"Due to their long experience, Iraqi artists have helped in teaching more of our younger artists," said Razem.

The art market, too, was affected by the flight of Iraqi artists to Jordan.

According to Abu Shawesh, however, the large presence of Iraqi artists has led to increased competition and a trend towards the commercialisation of art.

But Razem described the Iraqi input as "a catalyst for many of the privately owned, business-based exhibition halls."

As to the role played by art critics in Jordan, Abu Shawesh believes there is much room for improvement. Again, he said, education and experience are essential to the art critic's trade.

There are presently 15 exhibition halls in the Kingdom, divided between a number of cultural centres, large private art institutes and privately owned, business-based exhibition halls, which is more than adequate to meet the needs of the local art society, according to Razem.

"There is still room for growth, but Jordanian artists have much to offer," concluded Abu Ayash.

Drugs department seizes 24kg of hashish, smuggled jewellery

AMMAN (Petra) — The Anti-Narcotics Department seized large quantities of drugs and smuggled jewellery in the first week of November and arrested a number of people in connection with the illicit operations, according to the department's director, Nazih Shreideh.

Shreideh said a total of 24 kilograms of hashish, 10 kilograms of heroin and 880 grammes of cocaine were confiscated. The persons arrested, all Jordanians, have been referred to court, he added.

The department also seized 304 pieces of jewellery weighing 1.8 kilograms and worth JD30,000, according to Shreideh.

Calling on the public to cooperate with the department in helping crack drug trafficking rings, Shreideh said those arrested were Jordanian citizens who had collaborated with a number of dealers from a neighbouring country.

what's going on

REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE

* A Service of Remembrance at the Church of the Holy Redeemer at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* A three-dimensional exhibition on canvas by Susanna Caldwell, Darleen Karpowicz, and Rawabi Abu Ghazaleh Silawi at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre (Artisana), Jabal Amman, off the second circle, until Nov. 10 (Telefax 4647858).

* Exhibition of works by Palestinian artist Kamal Boullata entitled "Homage to Jerusalem," an exhibition of paintings by late Palestinian artist Zulfar Al Sa'di, an exhibition by Palestinian-American photographer Sa'id Nuseibah entitled "The Farthest Mosque" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until Nov. 12 (Tel. 4643251/2).

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U.K. unhappy with pace of Kosovo OSCE deployment

LONDON (R) — Britain is unhappy with what it sees as the slow deployment of an international observer mission to Kosovo and is unilaterally sending more staff to the region, a senior official said Friday.

Under a deal agreed last month between Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and Western mediator Richard Holbrooke, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is to send 2,000 observers into Kosovo.

But the British official said the OSCE mission — which will check that Serb troops and police do not resume their bloody crackdown in the predominantly ethnic Albanian region — was running into severe logistical problems.

"The deployment of the OSCE mission has not gone as fast as we would have wished. There are a whole series of problems which cannot be brushed aside," he told reporters.

Britain will therefore be sending 50 men and 20

armoured Land Rover vehicles to join the Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission, which was set up to operate in Kosovo before the Holbrooke-Milosevic deal and will eventually be folded into the OSCE mission.

"We would hope that others would follow," the official said, complaining about the obstacles which still had to be removed.

"There are monumental logistical problems. How do you get 2,000 people into an area like that and where do you put them? Part of the problem is that the Americans have taken all the hotel rooms in Kosovo," the British official said.

He said the Serbs were sticking to the terms of the deal but complained that Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) separatist guerrillas were becoming more active.

"If the deal is to last, it has to be observed by both sides," he said.

"The Serbs have withdrawn their police and army units and the ones in Kosovo have on the whole

returned to their barracks.

But no one is complacent and we need to keep an eye on Milosevic, given his past form." At one point during the Serb crackdown on the KLA more than 200,000 people fled their homes, some sheltering in the surrounding hills and countryside.

Although Western observers say only a few thousand are still without shelter, the British official said conditions for those who might wish to return home were grim.

"Their houses have been burned out. During the offensive the Serbs burned crops and killed animals. There is no indigenous food supply," he said.

"A very swift logistic effort is required. If we can maintain the ceasefire and access to the refugees, we can probably meet their emergency needs." The international community aims to provide food and other aid for 400,000 people in Kosovo between now and next June.

China's moves towards Tibet talks anger exiles

BEIJING (AFP) — China has said it is ready to talk with Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama if he agrees not to advocate independence, but the overture has angered radical Tibetan exiles.

"The dialogue can start as soon as the Dalai Lama accepted the requests by the Chinese central government," Yu Shunling, spokesman for the Chinese embassy in Washington, told a news conference Thursday in the U.S. capital, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

"It depends on how the Dalai Lama will act. The ball is now in his court," Yu added.

China has urged the Dalai Lama to explicitly renounce independence for Tibet and make clear that Tibet and Taiwan are part of China.

The Dalai Lama, who fled Tibet in 1959 after a failed uprising against the Chinese regime, is in the United States on a nine-day visit.

Samdong Rinpoche, speaker of the exiled Tibetan parliament, said this week in India the Dalai Lama was preparing to make a statement on the political status of Tibet during his U.S. stay.

The statement will contain "major concessions" to which the government-in-exile would be seeking a reciprocal response from Beijing, he said.

While renouncing the

cause of full independence for Tibet, he said the Dalai Lama would be seeking a "high degree" of autonomy, and not just for the area currently defined as Tibet but for the Chinese government.

Yu said however the Dalai Lama had failed to inform Beijing of the statement through the "existing channel," showing that he was not serious about the dialogue.

"The channel is there and he did not use it. Instead, he makes stories through the media with the aim of putting more pressures on the central government. How could we believe he is serious about the dialogue?"

China Wednesday issued a fresh warning to the Dalai Lama to keep quiet over contacts, accusing the exiled Tibetan leader of whipping up propaganda for his U.S. visit.

"The Dalai Lama must sincerely abandon calls for the independence of Tibet and cease activities designed to split the motherland," according to a government spokesman quoted by Xinhua.

Chinese reports say the Dalai Lama was seeking meetings with Vice President Al Gore and even President Bill Clinton in the United States. China's Washington spokesman said Beijing was strongly opposed to any meeting between foreign government officials and the Dalai Lama.

The 62-year-old Nobel laureate, who heads a government in exile in Dharamsala, India, where some 100,000 Tibetans live as refugees, has also angered Beijing by making a visit last year to Taiwan, which China regards as a renegade province.

Radical Tibetan exiles say the Dalai Lama is making too many concessions to China.

Moving towards recognition of Tibet and Taiwan as parts of China is anathema to many exiled Tibetans, including the 10,000-member Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC), which refuses to contemplate any policy that falls short of complete independence.

"We hope very much that His Holiness will never make any statement that will harm the Tibetan inspiration, by which I mean the many Tibetans, including the TYC, who are fighting for independence," TYC general secretary Dema Lhundup told AFP from Dharamsala.

"There are so many people who don't want to live with the Chinese. We hope he will keep in mind these important things," Lhundup said by telephone from Dharamsala.

The exiled government's information and external affairs minister, T.C. Tethong, confirmed the existence of the statement, but stressed that "no definite date or time" had been set for its release.

Combination drug holds promise of AIDS cure

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A new drug combination can clear out the AIDS virus from the blood completely and promises a potential cure for the deadly disease, a top global AIDS expert said here Friday.

Anthony Fauci from the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases in the United States told a conference on immunology in New Delhi that the drug combination removes the virus from human CD-4 cells, where it hides.

"Adding interleukins, a class of proteins secreted by immune cells, to the existing three-drug combination to treat AIDS patients totally eliminates the HIV virus from CD-4

cells that circulate in the blood," Fauci was quoted as saying by the Press Trust of India.

Scientists are now studying "whether this new combination clears out the virus from lymph tissues and other potential reservoirs of the resting virus," he said.

"The findings will be published once the lymph tissue studies are completed. If this happens, then researchers have on hand a potential cure for AIDS."

Fauci said his team studied 14 patients put on a combination of the three drugs and interleukins which was given intermittently five times a week for at least eight weeks.

"Then the team selected six patients and painstakingly studied 10 million

cells taken from each. There were no detectable levels of virus in these patients."

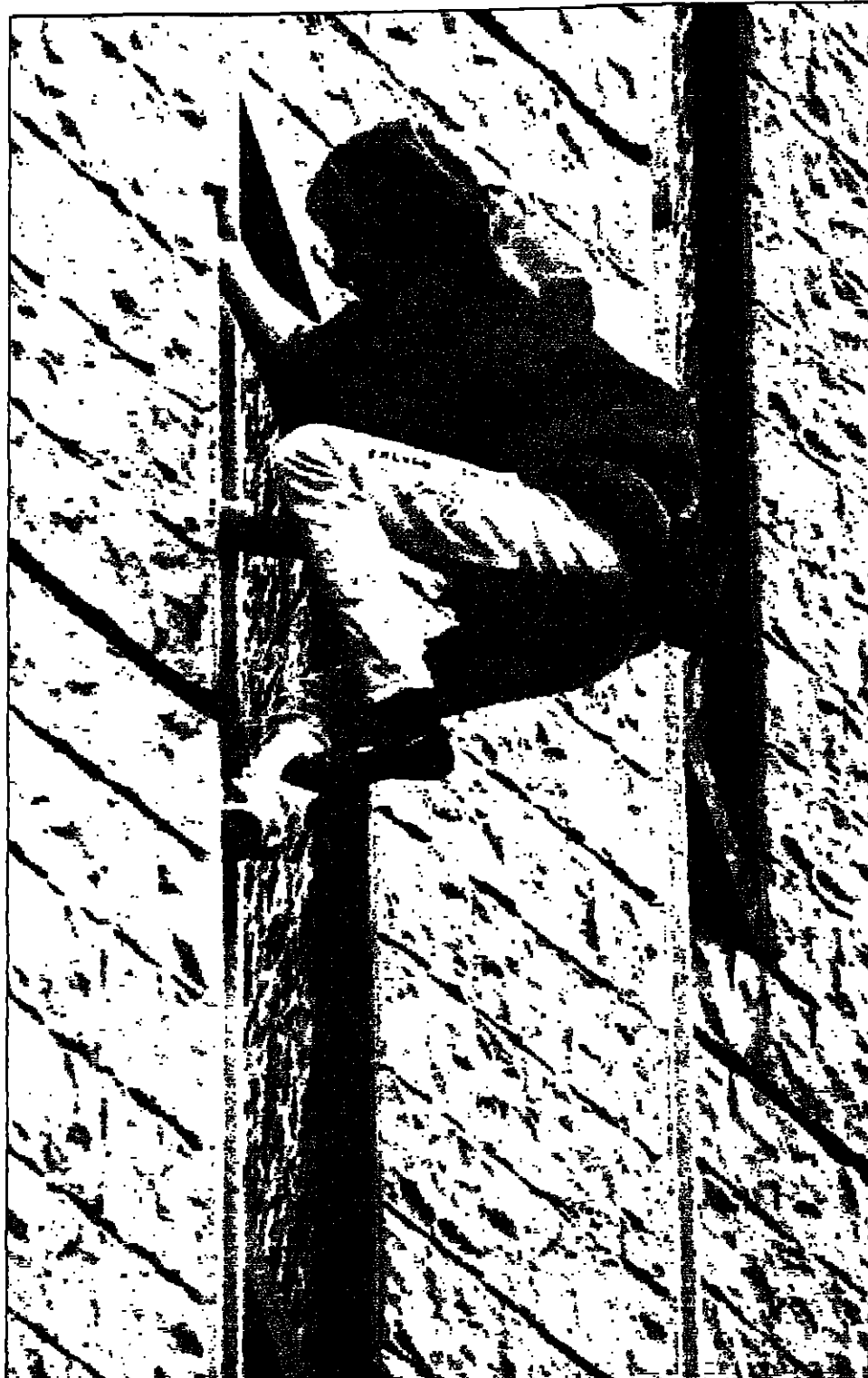
He said investigations on a further 300 million cells taken from each of the six patients produced the same negative result.

"For the first time, the virus has been cleared from infected resting cells."

"The good news is that we can't find the virus. The sobering news is that we have not looked everywhere," Fauci said.

Most of the 16,000 new HIV infection cases registered every day worldwide are in developing countries.

More than 40 million people are expected to be infected with HIV by 2000.



Notorious French skyscraper climber Alan Robert, known as 'Spiderman', scales the 232-metre Shinjuku Centre Building in Tokyo. Robert was arrested when he reached the top of the building for intruding on private property (Reuters photo)

France's 'Spiderman' nabbed atop Tokyo building

TOKYO (R) — France's self-styled "Spiderman" Alain Robert was arrested Friday, seconds after he ended a nerve-rattling climb up one of Tokyo's tallest buildings.

Robert, 35, who already has scaled the Empire State Building in New York and the Obelisk and Eiffel Tower in Paris, brought crowds to a halt in the central Tokyo district of Shinjuku with his ascent of the 54-floor Shinjuku Centre Building.

He took about one hour to climb the 54-floor building using just hand and toe

holds on the concrete face of the skyscraper.

A police spokesman said Robert was in custody on suspicion of trespassing.

The French daredevil had planned to scale another building Thursday but called off that attempt when police learned of the bid through media reports.

In today's ascent, he raced from a car and was well on his way up the building before police were alerted and arrived with ladders and mattresses to save him in case he fell.

"It was incredible. The

wind was quite strong today," said 22-year-old Hiroyuki Suzuki who was among hundreds of spectators who gathered to watch his exploit.

Another spectator Sachiyo Kohyama, 32, said he had seen other climbs by Robert on television.

"I used to think, wow, what a weird guy," Kohyama told Reuters. "Now I know he is a weird guy."

Robert took the name "Spiderman" from the comic strip of the same name.

Ancient volcanic eruptions discovered in the Antarctica

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — A huge volcanic eruption rocked Antarctica about 25 million years ago, spewing ash as far as 70 kilometres into the atmosphere, according to scientific data released Friday.

Scientists from New Zealand, Australia, Britain, Germany, Italy and the United States discovered debris from the eruption encased in the rock taken from the seabed off the ice continent's coast.

Samples from drill cores taken from 110 metres below the seabed off Cape Roberts show that layers of volcanic debris from the blast were blown into the air, then settled on the sea floor. The cores indicate there were up to four of the huge blasts.

The Cape, 140 kilometres from New Zealand's Scott Base and the U.S. McMurdo Station on McMurdo Sound, is the site of a six-nation project drilling seabed deposits as part of a study of past climatic change.

Tim Higham, New Zealand's Antarctica spokesman, said Friday

that the rock cores are the first evidence of large volcanic eruptions in the area around 25 million years ago.

"The discovery of these volcanic layers demonstrates a far more spectacular history of volcanic activity than was previously suspected in the Ross Sea region," Higham said.

The thickness and coarseness of the main layer indicated a "large volume eruption that generated an ash cloud reaching 30 to 40 miles into the stratosphere." It suggested an eruption "as dramatic as that of Krakatau (in Indonesia) in 1883," which was heard — and spread dust — around the world.

While the exact site of the eruptions was unknown, scientists believe it was within 100 kilometres of the drilling site. The Mount Erebus active volcano is only a few miles from Scott Base.

"The eruptions recorded in this core probably had a significant impact, not only on Antarctica environment, but also on the global environment of the time,"

Higham said. Scientists believe rock cores from 500 metres below the sea bed could unlock the history of the Antarctic's climate and offer clues to global warming.

They also believe that studying earlier Antarctic warm spells may help them predict what global warming may do to the world's ice and sea levels.

The New Zealand 9 million dollars (\$5 million) joint venture drilling programme is expected to reach as far back as 40 to 60 million years this summer, in the second hole drilled by the project.

Last year's hole yielded material going back 22 million years, including 32 different shellfish fossils and 15 previously unknown species of algae, which scientists said indicate the Ross Sea off Antarctica was several degrees warmer 1.2 million to 1.8 million years ago.

Fifty scientists from 28 institutions around the world are analysing and describing the seabed core as it is recovered by the drilling team.

NEWS IN BRIEF

'British government too soft on terrorists'

LONDON (KUNA) — Nearly half of Britons believe the government is soft on terrorism and most people on the British mainland disapprove of further prisoner releases in Northern Ireland before all weapons are decommissioned, according to a poll published here Friday. The Gallup poll for the Daily Telegraph newspaper said about three-quarters of people asked backed the pro-British unionist demands over the thorny issue of decommissioning of paramilitary weapons before the release of convicted terrorists. Despite a majority of people believing the April 10 peace agreement had put Ulster on the path to peace, the survey also showed overwhelming support for immediate dismantling of terrorist organisations. The poll of voters on Britain's mainland showed widespread hostility towards Sinn Fein, the political wing of the IRA, with seven in ten people saying the party should not be allowed to join the new Northern Ireland autonomous government before all IRA weapons were decommissioned. But a majority of people, 54 per cent, also said that the police in Ulster should be substantially reformed. The Republican movement and the Catholic community in Ulster has always blamed the police for discriminating against them and being in favour of the Protestant majority in the province.

Investigators question man in Kremlin car bombing

MOSCOW (AP) — The man who blew up his car just outside the Kremlin gates was being questioned by security officials Friday at a Moscow hospital, authorities said. Ivan Orlov, 65, suffered only "scratches" Wednesday evening when he drove his car across Red Square, and then jumped out and detonated a bomb just outside Spassky Gate, said Alexander Stetschuk, the chief physician at Sklifosovsky Hospital. Three security guards were injured, all more seriously than Orlov, the doctor told the ITAR-TASS news agency. The most seriously injured man, a young soldier, remained in intensive care but his life was no longer in danger, the doctor said. Orlov was "the healthiest of the four men," the doctor added. "We have nothing against his being removed from the hospital." Orlov was being questioned by security officials Friday, the doctor said. A psychiatrist examined him at a hospital and issued a preliminary diagnosis of schizophrenia, the ITAR-TASS news agency said, citing the Federal Security Service, which carries out the investigation. Orlov worked for the magazine Russian Pravda, which carried anti-Semitic and nationalist articles. The magazine's editor, Alexander Aratov, said that Orlov "hated President Boris Yeltsin because Yeltsin's policy had driven him to despair." Yeltsin's office is inside the Kremlin walls, but the president has been in the Black Sea resort of Sochi for the past week recovering from an illness.

Researchers map part of the gene pattern for malaria

WASHINGTON (AP) — Researchers have unravelled part of the genetic pattern of the malaria parasite, an advance that may lead to new drugs against one of the world's major disease killers. In a study co-authored by 27 scientists at seven different institutions, researchers report in the journal Science that they have identified 210 genes in one chromosome of Plasmodium falciparum, the most deadly form of malaria. A statement from the National Institutes of Health said that the genetic information will help find new targets for drugs and identify parts of the malaria parasite that could be used to make vaccines against the disease. Malaria is a disease caused by a mosquito-borne parasite. It annually infects more than 300 million people worldwide and kills about 3 million. Most of the deaths are among children in Africa. Some forms of malaria have become resistant to preventive drugs, and the disease is becoming an increasingly serious problem in some parts of the world.

Mitch strikes Florida

MIAMI (AP) — Still not finished after its deadly rampage across Central America, tropical storm Mitch wrecked boats and flipped mobile homes in the Florida Keys before breaking up over the Atlantic. At least one death was blamed on the storm, that of a driver whose car slid off a highway during a downpour and hit a light pole near Fort Lauderdale. The storm blew across South Florida Thursday with up to 20 cm of rain and gusts of at least 112 kph, knocking out power to much of the Keys and causing damage there just six weeks after the wrath of Hurricane Georges. Georges destroyed or damaged 4,000 homes on the scenic, 192-kilometre island chain on Sept. 25. Mitch battered Central America last week at hurricane strength, killing thousands. It dropped to tropical storm status, then reversed field and crossed the Gulf of Mexico towards Florida, picking up steam over the warm water. Hardest hit were the Keys, where tornadoes touched down, mobile homes flipped, trees fell and power lines snapped. On Key Largo, dozens of mobile homes were overturned and some streets were under water. By Thursday afternoon, Mitch, with winds near 96 kph, was beginning to break up over the Atlantic about 160 kilometres northeast of Little Abaco Islands in the Bahamas. It was no longer considered a tropical storm.

Opel recalls 59,600 cars for steering fault

RUESSELSHEIM, Germany (AFP) — Car maker Opel, the German unit of General Motors Corp., said Friday that it was recalling a total 59,600 of its Astra cars to check for a possible steering fault. The owners of the vehicles were being invited to have Opel dealers check the fit of the steering column of their new Astra model, Opel said in a statement. Some customers had reported that the steering wheel did not turn smoothly and had reported noises emanating from the steering system, Opel said. The checks would be carried out free of charge for the customers. While the company said that the recall action affected 59,600 cars, the German news agency DPA quoted sources from Opel's supervisory board as saying that more than 150,000 cars were being checked across Europe.

China road accidents kill 54,909 this year

BEIJING (R) — Chinese authorities, worried by a growing number of road accidents and casualties, have decided to clamp down on drunk driving and other road safety violations, the Legal Daily said in an edition seen Friday. Road accidents in China killed 54,909 people in the first nine months of this year — an average of 203 a day — climbing 4.7 per cent compared to the same period last year. The number of people injured in road accidents soared 61.5 per cent year-on-year to 225,737 during the period — an average of 836 a day. Chinese officials, alarmed by unsafe driving, have vowed to clamp down on offenders and step up punishment for drunk driving, overloading of passengers and other violations, the newspaper said. China's roads are some of the most dangerous in the world. Road safety has become increasingly difficult to control following an economic boom in the last two decades and an explosion in the number of private cars in China.

World News

Chileans & Pinochet

Chile (AP) — Augusto Pinochet in London... thousands of Chileans...

President Pinochet... Chileans... thousands of Chileans...

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Chileans split over Pinochet

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) —

Gen. Augusto Pinochet's arrest in London caused a deep split among Chileans, and now an equally profound division is emerging on what to do when the former dictator returns home.

Some insist — as they long have — that he should be tried in Chile for human rights violations that occurred during his long regime. Others speak of forgiveness and the need for reconciliation.

One idea appears less controversial: even some staunch Pinochet supporters say that whatever the outcome of his legal situation in London, he should retire from politics.

Pinochet was arrested Oct. 16 in London on a warrant from Spanish Judge Baltasar Garçon, who wants to extradite him on accusations of genocide, terrorism and torture.

The London High Court recognised Pinochet's immunity from prosecution as a former chief of state, but an appeal on that ruling has yet to be decided by the House of Lords.

During Thursday's proceedings in London, attorney Ian Brownlie told the House of Lords that the Spanish warrant was "a hopeful opening in the wall of impunity" that has surrounded the 82-year-old general.

Brownlie represents the two sisters of William Beausire, a British stockbroker who vanished in 1975; and Sheila Cassidy, a British doctor tortured in 1976.

The hearing was adjourned until Monday, when Pinochet's lawyers were to begin arguing his case.

The Chilean government, admitting "deep political differences" with Pinochet, continues to seek his release "as a matter of principle" — claiming he has diplomatic immunity and that foreign courts have no right to deal with events that occurred in Chile.

Other Chileans appear uneasy at seeing foreign tribunals attempting to seek justice, something they say was never accomplished here.

"The world is telling us that we have an uncompleted task when it comes to human rights," said socialist leader Ricardo Lagos.

The civilian government that came after Pinochet in 1990 determined that 2,095 people were killed for political reasons during his

17-year dictatorship, and 1,102 remain unaccounted for after being arrested by his security services. Thousands were arrested and tortured, and tens of thousands forced into exile.

President Eduardo Frei, addressing a gathering of businessmen late Tuesday, said: "Chile has a wounded soul" over the human rights issue and vowed "to try to heal that wound with patience, generosity." "But it won't be an easy task," Frei admitted.

Viviana Diaz, vice president of an association of dissidents' relatives who disappeared after being arrested by Pinochet's secret police, vowed to continue efforts to have Pinochet tried.

"We will continue our fight for truth and justice," she said.

A "commission of personalities," to be headed by Santiago's Catholic Bishop Francisco Errazuriz, is being formed to gather information on the missing dissidents.

But a report Thursday in the government newspaper La Nación anticipated difficulty for that plan because many of the dead were cremated immediately after their killings.

A panel of legal experts from pro-government parties is studying the possibilities of a Pinochet trial.

That move wouldn't be easy because Pinochet has immunity as a senator-for-life — a post he created. He also is protected by an amnesty law he issued while in power that covers the 1973-78 period, when the most serious abuses occurred.

Meanwhile, many politicians say Pinochet should retire from politics upon his return.

"He remains as a divisive figure for Chileans — as he was 10 years ago," Foreign Minister Jose Miguel Insulza said.

Interior Minister Raul Troncoso added: "He would do his country a big favour by retiring." And for the first time, even some rightists who support Pinochet are joining calls for him to retire, or at least take a lower profile.

Several senators tried to make it easier for Pinochet to retire, proposing a constitutional amendment to allow members of congress to resign — legally prohibited now.



Indonesian students cover their faces during a protest against former President Suharto inside a university campus in Jakarta. Thousands of students demanded that Suharto and his cronies be put on trial for crimes against the country. Political tensions have risen in Indonesia ahead of the Nov. 10-13 special session of the country's top legislative body, the People's Consultative Assembly (Reuters photo)

Indonesian students demand Suharto trial

JAKARTA (R) — Thousands of Indonesian students Friday protested to demand former President Suharto and his cronies stand trial for crimes against the country during his long autocratic rule.

But there were no reports of any violence during the protests which came as tension mounts ahead of next week's special session of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), to rewrite the country's political laws and nudge Indonesia towards democracy.

About 10,000 students gathered in the University of Indonesia campus in central Jakarta but later dispersed peacefully.

They called for action against Suharto, whose 32-

year rule came to an abrupt close in May in the face of a growing economic and social crisis.

The students also demanded an end to the political role of the military, which long-propped up the Suharto regime and whose image has been severely tarnished in recent months following revelations of mass human rights abuses during the Suharto era.

Several hundred members of the Islamic Students Union (HMI) protested outside the grounds of the national parliament and in the northern city of Medan, also to urge that Suharto be put on trial.

There were no reports of any violence.

Political tension has risen ahead of the special session of

the nation's top legislative body from Nov. 10-13.

The session is set to approve political reforms drafted by the government of President B.J. Habibie, who took over from Suharto in May.

Habibie, a longtime associate of Suharto, has said he will hold general elections next May and presidential elections at the end of 1999 to ensure a representative government takes power.

But some political analysts have said he is under a cloud because of his links with the Suharto regime and many question whether the Assembly, most of whose members owe their position to Suharto, will seriously pave the way to Indonesia's first real taste of democracy.

Rwandan strongman Kagame admits role in Congo war

PRETORIA (R) —

Rwandan military strongman Major-General Paul Kagame acknowledged Friday that his troops were helping rebels in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, paving the way for a ceasefire in the troubled country.

Kagame told a news conference at the end of talks with South African President Nelson Mandela in Pretoria that his involvement beginning in August, which his country has previously denied, was based on security concerns for his tiny but militarily powerful nation.

"Initially our country hadn't, for good reasons, come out specifically to talk about the presence of our troops in the Congo. We have informed President Mandela that we are there specifically for our national security," Kagame said.

Mandela, who stood by as Kagame spoke, said the admission paved the way for a ceasefire and a standstill of all military forces in the Congo, Africa's third largest country.

Mandela said a meeting of the regional Southern African Development Community (SADC) would be held soon to formally hammer out a ceasefire deal and a framework for the withdrawal of foreign forces in the Congo.

"There must be a withdrawal of all foreign troops without exception," Mandela said adding, "a solution to the Congolese

problem should ultimately include elections."

Kagame's comments came a day after Congolese rebel leader Ernest Wamba dia Wamba said Ugandan and Rwandan troops were helping his rebels fight Kabila in a widening war in the vast central African state.

Kagame, a 39-year old general who successfully plotted and executed the overthrow in 1996 of veteran dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, said his forces would not withdraw until Rwanda's security concerns were addressed.

"We shall support and we fully support the withdrawal of all forces including our own forces. For us it is an issue of making sure that whatever solution is found in the Congo, it must take care of all our security concerns," he added.

Kagame accuses Congolese President Laurent Kabila of arming and training exiled Rwandan Hutu militia and former soldiers with the aim of destabilising Rwanda.

Rwandan Hutus are blamed for the 1994 genocide of an estimated 300,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Rwanda had consistently denied any involvement in the rebellion which began on Aug. 2, while Uganda says its troops are on Congolese territory merely to flush out Ugandan rebels carrying out cross-border raids.

The rebels have repeatedly called for direct talks

with Kabila — whose forces have been reinforced by soldiers from Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Chad — but the Congolese leader has refused, insisting that Rwanda and Uganda withdraw their troops.

With Kagame's admission, officials said Mandela would now push with backing from United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan for an immediate ceasefire, a standstill of all forces and direct talks between rebels, Congolese political groups and the government.

This would be followed by the withdrawal of all forces.

Regional security sources said departing foreign forces would be replaced simultaneously by a multinational force under the auspices of the U.N., the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and SADC.

Regional sources estimate that apart from the national government armies operating in the country, there are more than 60,000 combatants involved on both sides. The latest war in the Congo erupted after army units in the eastern Kivu region mutinied accusing Kabila of corruption, nepotism, incompetence and failure to chart out a political programme for Africa's third largest country.

The rebels have since captured about 45 per cent of the country including Congo's third largest city of Kisangani, and airports and towns along the Uganda and Rwanda borders.

Glenn reluctantly prepares for return to Earth

HOUSTON (R) — It took him a long time to get back there, so John Glenn was in no hurry to leave.

But Friday, his historic return to space after 36 years, he was ready to leave his six crewmates on the shuttle Discovery got ready for the trip home.

Barring an unexpected delay, Discovery is scheduled to land at 11:06 a.m. CST (12:06 p.m. EST/1706 GMT) Saturday at the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida.

The 77-year-old Glenn said in a news conference Thursday he did not want to end the nine-day mission in which he became the oldest person to fly in space and brought back memories of NASA's best days.

"I wish it could last another week," said Glenn, who in 1962 became the first American to orbit the earth.

But like it or not, the astronauts would spend Friday stowing gear and shutting down the 83 experiments packed into Discovery. Flight Commander Curt Brown and pilot Steve Lindsey were to check the flight control systems they will use to steer the

orbiter back to Earth.

Brown was awaiting word from ground controllers about a potentially troublesome drag chute tucked away in Discovery's stern. The chute, which is deployed at landing for stability and braking, was left exposed when a panel ripped away from the shuttle's body at launch on Oct. 29.

Brown said at the Thursday news conference that he thought the chute was "really no issue at all," but admitted "there's a lot of ifs there." One concern is that the chute could suddenly deploy when the shuttle reenters the earth's atmosphere, but NASA officials said the chances of that happening are small.

They also said the chute was not used on early shuttle missions and is not necessary for a safe landing unless crosswinds are high, which was not likely to be the case.

A NASA spokeswoman said forecasters called for "generally favourable conditions" for the Saturday touchdown.

Glenn has been a guinea pig for geriatric research on the flight, but also has brought a lustre to the space programme

not seen since the moon missions of the 1960 and 70s.

The novelty of seeing an elderly man fly with crew members half his age and the sentimental return to space by a national hero drew attention rare for most shuttle flights.

Friday, the shuttle crew was awakened at 3:40 a.m. CST (940 GMT) by a song, "Voyage Into Space," written for Glenn by his friend, composer and pianist Peter Nero.

Vice President Al Gore, speaking to Discovery from Washington Thursday, told the astronauts: "You've got a proud nation and a proud world watching... thank you very much for your courage."

Glenn, despite his age, apparently has suffered no ill effects from weightlessness. He told former Mercury 7 astronaut Scott Carpenter, who was with Gore, that space would be a great place for a retirement home.

"You don't need a walker up here. You don't need to worry about osteoporosis or canes or anything like that because you just float across the room. There's no such things as broken hips," he said.

Intelligence analyst indicted, accused of spying for KGB

WASHINGTON (AP) — A former intelligence analyst with a supersensitive Pentagon agency was indicted Thursday on charges he was a spy for the Soviet KGB.

A grand jury in Alexandria, Virginia, alleged that David Sheldon Boone, analyst for the National Security Agency, spied for the Soviet security and espionage agency in the late 1980s, then fell prey this year to an FBI sting operation in which a former agent posed as a Russian spy and offered to recruit Boone.

The grand jury also seeks, according to a Justice Department release, "forfeiture of proceeds derived from his espionage activity, including \$69,000 in U.S. currency." Of that total, the department said, the Soviets paid Boone \$60,000 in several instalments beginning in the fall of 1988 for a variety of top-secret documents. Among them were material on tactical nuclear weapons targeting against the Soviet bloc and a 300- to 400-page handbook listing reconnaissance and intelligence collection systems used by the U.S. military.

The other \$9,000 payment went to Boone in September of this year when a former FBI agent posing as a member of the Russian spy service contacted Boone and asked him to resume spying, the Justice Department said Thursday.

After a Sept. 12 meeting in London with the contact, Boone flew to Dulles International Airport in Washington's Virginia suburbs last month and was arrested without resistance at an airport hotel.

Boone's attorney did not immediately return a call seeking comment. A native of Flint, Michigan, Boone, 46, was living in Germany at the time of the sting operation.

According to the Justice Department, Boone was trained in cryptanalysis and the Russian language and was assigned to a U.S. Army field station in Augsburg, Germany, for three tours from October 1988 through June 1991, when most of his alleged espionage activity occurred.

The former army sergeant also served at the National Security Agency at Fort Meade, Maryland.

Boone remained in custody pending his arraignment scheduled for next Monday. A trial date is to be set at the arraignment.

One count is for conspiracy to commit espionage. The other two relate to his alleged handing over two top-secret documents to his Soviet handler. If convicted of any of the three counts, Boone could face life imprisonment or the death penalty.

Batman creator dies at 83

NEW YORK (AFP) — Bob Kane, the comic book artist and writer who created the character of Batman, has died at his home in California at the age of 83, his publisher, DC Comics, said Thursday.

Kane, who died Tuesday, created Batman while he was a teenager, never imagining that his "Caped Crusader" would attain the worldwide popularity it is a cultural icon that he did.

A writer, artist and self-described "doodler," Kane once said the drawings of Leonardo da Vinci inspired him to create Batman, the alter-ego of millionaire Bruce Wayne, who uses his vast fortune to avenge the murder of his parents by fighting crime.

Batman, portrayed as an ordinary human being, debuted in 1939, a year after Superman, the heroic alien from Krypton, appeared in DC Comics, and

proved to be an immediate hit in comic books, newspaper comic strips, television and the movies.

In addition to creating Batman, Kane was the artist who first drew the hero's sidekick Robin, the Boy Wonder, as well as the Dynamic Duo's arch-enemies: the Joker, Catwoman and the Riddler.

Kane was born in New York City. At the age of 15 he won second prize in a drawing contest that called for copying the characters from a comic strip. He attended the Commercial Art Studio, then went on to study at Cooper Union and the Art Students League. He broke into the comic business in the mid-1930s as a staff artist for the Eisner-Iger shop. His first published work appeared in "Wow, What A Magazine" in September 1936.

In 1938, Kane began working

at DC Comics. It was his collaboration with writer Bill Finger on adventure features that led to the creation of Batman.

Kane drew for the magazine for a brief period, since his skills were not up to DC Comic standard. He wrote stories for the magazine until the mid-1940s, but nevertheless drew a large salary since he insisted on owning a copyrighted interest in the publication when it first appeared in May 1939.

Batman's popularity finally led Kane to Hollywood where he helped create the Courageous Cat TV show in the 1950s and the famous Batman television series in 1965.

Kane broke away from comics shortly after he created the Cool McCool cartoon character in 1969, and had since exhibited his paintings and sketches nationally.

Chechen minister warns Maskhadov against cozying up to Russia

GROZNY (AFP) — A senior minister recently axed from Aslan Maskhadov's government warned Friday that the Chechen president has alienated many of his former allies by taking a soft line towards Russia.

Movladi Udugov, a field commander who fought alongside Maskhadov during Chechnya's war for independence and later became the republic's foreign minister, was sacked by Maskhadov last month along with the rest of the cabinet.

Maskhadov parted ways with Udugov shortly after holding talks with Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, where both leaders pledged to improve their chilly relations and fight

unruly gangs plaguing the northern Caucasus republic.

"You ask what my departure is due to," Udugov said. "I will reply: between Maskhadov and me there were different approaches to politics with Russia. Our opinion in this question diverged."

Udugov, who said he would not work with the new government, added Maskhadov has ignored calls from senior ministers to impose strict Sharia laws in the republic and has continued to follow the Russian civilian code.

"Chechnya is experiencing constitutional crisis," Udugov said.

Maskhadov this week also ordered the arrest of another war hero, Salman Raduyev,

who has formed his own clan following of armed soldiers who have threatened to launch a "civil war" in Chechnya.

Chechnya, which gained its de facto independence following the 1996 retreat of Russian troops, has yet to achieve any formal international recognition.

Moscow still considers it a part of its federation, and no foreign country has recognised its independence.

Isolated economically, it has become plagued by crime, with kidnappings for ransom on the rise, and several army chiefs maintaining hundreds of men under arms, ready to rebel against Maskhadov's authority at the slightest provocation.

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Peace ends violence

ONCE AGAIN, faced with disaster and bloodshed, the Israeli cabinet has chosen a shortsighted policy of retaliation rather than one of justice, wisdom and legality, de facto helping terrorism score yet another victory.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's decision yesterday to indefinitely suspend the ratification of the Wye River memorandum after a car bomb attack at Jerusalem's main open produce market wounded 21 people and killed two suicide bombers, plays right into the hands of extremists both in the Israeli and Palestinian camps.

Coupled with the subsequent announcement by Netanyahu's media advisor, David Bar Illan, that the Likud-led cabinet will soon publish tenders to build Jewish settlements on Jabal Abu Ghneim, Israeli policies seem courting disaster.

It was precisely Netanyahu's decision in March 1997 to build in Jabal Abu Ghneim, in Arab east Jerusalem, that torpedoed the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks and resulted in the 19-month deadlock broken only two weeks ago at Wye River.

The voices of wisdom in favour of the ratification of the deal that Israel signed on Oct. 23 raised yesterday by Israeli President Ezer Weizman, Palestinian officials and France are falling on deaf ears.

What these voices are saying is that Tel Aviv should now implement the deal despite the attack, even because of it. This latest act of violence against innocent people has provided one further proof of the urgency to finally settle this 50-year question and achieve real peace.

Disappointingly enough, we did not hear U.S. President Bill Clinton, who worked so hard for the finalisation of the Wye River accord, join the chorus of calls on the Likud-led Netanyahu cabinet to work towards peace, and not surrender to the reasons of violence.

If extremism and terrorism from both sides are to be defeated, that will only be achieved when Palestinians and Israelis will disengage, each people enjoying their legitimate rights on their national soil. By suspending debate on the ratification of the Wye memorandum and announcing the publication of tenders for construction on Jabal Abu Ghneim, Netanyahu is only postponing, if not trying to avoid, the achievement of the conditions which will ensure the end of terrorism.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Mahmoud Jbour praised Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh for suspending the sale of the government's stake in the Jordan Telecommunication Company. He said the government's decision is evidence of its commitment to the well-being of the nation. Why should foreign experts be trusted more than Jordanians — Jordan has scores of people with doctorates and masters degrees upon whom the government has spent thousands, said the writer. Jbour suggested that all decisions should be studied in special workshops, comprising of both the public and the private sectors in order to avoid outside influences on any decisions taken.

Al Dustour's Majid Abu Daiak said the accusations launched by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) against Hamas are baseless, and were only made to justify their inability to reach any satisfactory settlement with Israel for the Palestinian people. The PNA claims that Hamas intends to attack Israel in order to hinder the implementation of the peace accord, but a quick review of the chronology of attacks carried out by Hamas against Israeli targets, shows that Hamas has never bombed Israel at crucial junctures in the peace process. However, the PNA, with this accusation, wants to justify bowing to Israeli demands concerning security, which directly harms the solidarity and unity of the Palestinian people. The underlying reason for this is not a weakness in the negotiating ability of the PNA, said Daiak, but a result of the imbalance in power between the PNA and Israel.

Jordanian Perspective

When to call a spade a spade

Dr. Musa Keilani

WHAT U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen heard in Amman a few days ago gave him another perspective on how patriotic Arabs see the crisis with Iraq.

It is indeed wishful thinking on the part of the U.S. that it could secure broad Arab support for further military action against Iraq for Baghdad's decision to cut off cooperation with U.N. weapon inspectors.

The Arab resistance against the American call for such support has to do with a conviction that the sweeping U.N. sanctions are there to stay despite anything that Iraq agrees to undertake, now or years later. As such, the Arab argument is strong against allowing the U.S. to have its way with an Arab state whose people have already suffered immensely.

Furthermore, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's efforts to live up to his unwritten pledge to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein — that the letter and spirit of the relevant resolutions rather than American desires would be the parameter for the lifting of the sanctions — have strengthened Iraq.

Those efforts were clearly signalled when Annan sought to shift the responsibility of verifying Iraq's compliance with U.N. demands to the U.N. Special Commission rather than Chief U.N. Weapons Inspector Richard Butler's team itself. Effectively, the thrust of Annan's efforts is fully compatible with the fundamental pillar of American justice: It is solely up to the prosecution to prove that the defendant is guilty beyond reasonable doubt. The defence is under no obligation to prove anything in court while it is free to expose holes in the prosecution's case.

Of course that is also part of most legal systems in the world, and the concept cannot be separated from the U.N.'s quasi-judicial approach to Iraq.

As such the U.S. stand, backed by Washington's faithful transatlantic ally Britain, that Iraq should prove its innocence, cannot be seen as any sign of good faith. Washington can of course argue that Iraq has not proved its good faith, but then it is also clear that the U.S. is not a neutral party to forward that argument. Its vested strategic

interests in maintaining the sanctions against Iraq are well-known, whether in terms of implicit control over the international oil market, military sales to the Gulf states while keeping them hostage to the scare of "regional" threats. The latest of that approach has manifested itself in the rounds that Cohen, has been making in the region, trying to peddle "missile defence" systems, worth billions of dollars so that Americans can remain employed in military industries.

Several Gulf states have already communicated to Cohen their rejection of his sales tactics, although in diplomatic terms, and that they are not interested in such systems.

But the U.S. is dead bent upon raising the temperature in the region so that it could indeed sell some of its obsolete weapons after giving them a new coat of paint.

While there cannot be any argument that many in Jordan including Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh and the Gulf states reject the Iraqi decision to unilaterally suspend cooperation with the U.N. Special Commission, they also realise the logic in Baghdad's demand that the U.N. provide a light at the end of the tunnel. The international community knows very well today that the strong American stand that it might go it alone in punishing Iraq regardless of world opinion is not borne out of a sincere concern to protect the Arab Gulf states against Iraqi threats, but from a consistent drive to defend American strategic interests in the region. It does not take much imagination for us to visualise most leaders of the Gulf countries snickering to themselves whenever top American officials unroll the litany of the threats posed to them. Indeed, those countries are tied to the U.S. in defence agreements.

But then again, some of those agreements are more like shotgun weddings than effective and sincere accords reached in good faith between sovereign countries. Quite simply, those countries did not have a real choice in the matter. And today, some of them are slowly coming to terms with the reality that it was perhaps a blunder for them to have invited the U.S. to "liberate" Kuwait from

Iraqi occupation against the wise counsel of countries like Jordan and others that the Gulf crisis could have been contained within an Arab context. But that is a different issue at this point.

What matters today is that there exists a real threat that the U.S. would indeed go it alone and launch military strikes against Iraq arguing that it does not need another U.N. Security Council authorisation for such action.

There are several reasons for that fear: The U.S. wants to do away with any notion that the U.N. took a leading role in the situation when Annan met with Saddam Hussein in Baghdad in February and defused a similar crisis. The U.S. wants to send a resounding message across the world that it alone calls the international shots. Second, the U.S. wants to scare the Gulf states into believing that there exists the potential for a new conflict which might drag them in, so that they spend billions on U.S. weapons. Third, American military action against Iraq at this point would not be limited to any suspected weapon sites in that country.

Targeted will be all those facilities and infrastructure that the Iraqis laboriously rebuilt from the ashes of the war. That would push Iraq several decades back and make it almost impossible for the country to get back on its feet for many years. That suits the U.S. fine, because Washington, Kuwait and some other Gulf states remain worried over the Iraqi potential to recover itself.

So far, the Arab states have withstood the latest American pressures and balked at extending blanket support for whatever action Washington has drawn up to be employed against Iraq. But, judging from statements coming from senior U.S. officials, military action against Iraq seems imminent regardless of the Arab call for diplomacy and dialogue to resolve the crisis.

The only way out of the situation is for the Arab World to speak in one voice through the Arab League after intense coordination against the common challenge posed by U.S. action. But then, are the Arab leaders courageous enough call a spade a spade?

Out of Order

Wrestling with 'body' politics

IT WAS a glorious day for American politics. Last Wednesday, while the Democrats were exulting in their victories in the U.S. mid-term elections and the Republicans were rethinking their moral crusade tactic to out President Bill Clinton, one candidate managed to rise above the petty political infighting to take his place as the independent leader of a state. One man had the vision to run a campaign handing him victory over two established candidates, one hailing from a prominent American political family and both receiving substantial backing, monetary and otherwise, from their respective parties. One person stood against the Goliath of Democratic-Republican domination and emerged the winner. This figure is none other than Jesse "The Body" Ventura, the new governor of Minnesota.

What makes Ventura's victory so special is the preparation that went into it. During the past decade, he wasn't out on the street advocating his ideas and building up a hardcore of devoted supporters, nor was he gaining political experience with other organisations, biding his time until he could run a campaign under his own banner. Ventura, instead, was busy body-slapping people, applying headlocks and throwing opponents over ropes. "The Body", you see, was a professional wrestler.

I'm sure that many people in the U.S. are upset that a former professional wrestler could actually capture something as important as a governorship. This, in my opinion, is a mistaken view. Based on my vast experience in watching professional wrestling, including seeing Ventura in action, I can testify that the job offers many opportunities for would-be politicians to hone their skills. Of these, probably the most

important is getting out of holds and sticky situations. It's even possible to turn an attempted hold against an opponent. As Clinton can tell anyone, the ability to do this is invaluable in the political arena. Perhaps it's not too late for Bill to find some wrestling tips, lace up his boots and get a little practice in the ring.

Ventura's election may also be an indication that the American electorate is ready to embrace a new type of entertainer-as-politician. American politics is full of precedents of performers who felt the need for a career change: actors (former President Ronald Reagan), musicians (Sonny Bono, of Sonny and Cher fame, was elected as a representative), and clowns (House Speaker Newt Gingrich, is just one prominent example among my current estimate of about 95 per cent of Congress members) have all served or are serving in one political capacity or another. I eagerly await the day when game show hosts (The Price is Right, I think, would be an appropriate campaign slogan) join the fray.

But the lessons to be learned from this upset victory, which "shocked the world," as The Body put it, are many and can apply not only to the U.S. but all countries, Jordan included. Since I learned of Ventura's election, I have been putting much thought into what can be done to achieve something similar here. Although there doesn't appear to be many former professional wrestlers in Jordan (the clown situation, on the other hand, seems to be pretty well taken care of), I think it's possible for a reform-minded party or group to take the bull by the horns and field candidates for the next parliamentary elections with qualifications similar to those of Ventura. With the way the current

electoral system is set up and the state of disarray among parties, this proposed list of populist candidates would be about the only way to get a number of independent deputies in the House. Sure, they may not have a coherent platform or any idea of what to do once they take their seats, but we'll worry about that at the appropriate time. In any event, my proposed group would be a certain improvement.

Or perhaps the best way to go about it would be to follow The Body's example exactly. To do this, the first item on the agenda would be the formation of the Jordan Wrestling Federation. The JWF (not to be confused with the Jordan Writers Federation) would groom a number of excellent wrestlers, skilled in all the tools of the trade, including headlocks, leglocks and the infamous "Iron Claw." They would also be trained to put on a good show for the cameras, so that when their wrestling days are over, they can make the transition to politics easily. But the most important piece of training they would receive is the knowledge that professional wrestling, like so many other institutions and setups, is all fake. There are three years remaining until the next scheduled elections in 2001. Let's begin working to make this dream a reality.

RECOMMENDED READING: "Diary of a Madman", by Nikolai Gogol. This short story, written by a Russian author less known than others such as Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy, details a civil servant's slide into madness. Despite the unpleasant subject, Gogol manages a funny narrative that keeps the reader guessing what grandiose idea the protagonist will come up with next. Insanity has never been so much fun.

'Insults' not taken lightly

Cohannists last week focused on Al Jazirah satellite channel controversy, abuse of children, and the peace process.

Reviewed by
Mohammad Ben Hussein

Al Ra'i's Mustafa Dabagh supported the government's decision to close down the Amman office of the Doha based Al Jazirah station and called on the Qatari government to act on the issue. There should be an end to these accusations and insults levelled at Jordan by the channel, demanded

the writer. The two-hour programme, Al-Ijjah Al Muakess (the opposite direction), accused Jordan of conspiring with Israel since its foundation in 1948, and also accused the Jordanian army of treason by surrendering Palestinian land to the Israelis without resistance. These accusations are aimed at sowing discontent within Jordanian society, said Dabagh, who accused the people behind the programme of being in contradiction with the basic morals of the Arab nation.

Al Dustour's Jihad Mommani expressed his outrage about the recent programme of Al Jazirah. He said Al Jazirah has disgraced itself by showing itself to be in cahoots with Syria which, he claimed, had planned this programme in order to tarnish the Kingdom's reputation by questioning its role in the Arab cause. Al-Ijjah Al Muakess has become a mouthpiece for the Syrian regime, said Mommani, who added that a question mark had been placed over Qatar's leadership and independence for allowing the programme to be transmitted. Mommani called into question the integrity of the host, Faisal Qassem, who had previously featured as an expert on Kosovo. Could it be, asked Mommani, that Qassem is such a genius as to be an expert on both the Jordan-Israeli peace and Kosovo, and will Al Jazirah also feature him as an expert on Kashmir should the Syrians so desire?

Al Ra'i's Fakhri Qu'war commented on the recent crime committed by a father against his eight months old baby girl. Qu'war said such crimes are committed every day against thousands of children in Jordan, and asked why children have to die before corporal punishment will be considered a crime. Children are beaten, not only by parents, but by

teachers, elder brothers and elder sisters, a practice which cannot but have a negative impact on a whole generation, added Qu'war. Parents think they own their children and are entitled to treat them as they like, and the government must pass laws which ban parents from harming their children, said Qu'war.

Al Dustour's Eissa Sha'bi commented on the Wye Plantation deal reached between the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and Israel which exchanges land for strict security measures. The deal requires the PNA to crack down on Islamic activists and track down Palestinians accused of killing Israelis. The writer said the deal clears the way for a possible confrontation between the PNA and Islamist movements such as Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. Sha'bi expected that there would be assassination attempts on Palestinian officials and eruptions of riots in PNA-controlled areas, which consequently will lead to limitations on personal freedoms and ever stricter security measures. But, according to Sha'bi, these confrontations will never lead to a civil war as expected by some observers and political analysts, not only because the Islamist movements have vowed not to turn their guns against the PNA, but also because the Palestinian society is much more homogeneous than Lebanon and Afghanistan, a factor that serves to stabilise communities.

Al Ra'i's Fahed Faneek commented on the Jerusalem report published last month discussing Netanyahu's strategy in the region. The report says that Netanyahu will make a bold initiative on the Syrian track, soon after finishing the implementation of the second phase of the peace agreement with the Palestinian National Authority. According to the report, the initiative will take place before final status talks, i.e. within the next five months, said Faneek. Netanyahu will open a secret channel of talks with Syria, and the resumption of negotiations will be announced after basic issues are agreed upon, said the report. The deal will mean a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights in exchange for peace with Syria, which effectively will finish the state of war not only with Syria, but also with Lebanon and the rest of the Arab World. The region is full of surprises, said Faneek, let's wait and see.

LETTERS

Best wishes

To the editor:

It would give me a great honour to be allowed to take this occasion to join in signing the letter of loyalty to my beloved King, wishing His Majesty a happy birthday and a long life, asking God to return him healthy and safe.

Salah Bani Hamad,
U.S.A.

Best wishes

To the editor:

From Nottingham, U.K., I would like to send my best wishes to H. M. King Hussein. I wish him a happy birthday, a full recovery and a prosperous life. There is no doubt that my feelings and wishes are shared by all the Jordanian and Arab students at the University of Nottingham.

Amin Al-Habaibeh
President of The Arab

Society,
University of Nottingham,
U.K.

Even though
we don't
agree...

To the editor:

The official measures taken against Al Jazirah TV station office and its representatives in Amman in retaliation to a programme, aired by that station which supposedly insulted Jordan and Jordanians is precisely what does not take place in a true democracy. Our impulsive reaction proves the point that we are still light years away from understanding and practising democracy and freedom of speech.

I agree that it is totally preposterous to hear sanctimonious cries about patriotism and pan-Arabism from stooges of states that annihilate their own people if so much as a muttering was

heard criticising those states. But look at our own reaction. Our daily newspapers were dedicated in full to impassioned attacks against the TV station, the programme and its participants. For someone like me who has no clue as to what has been said in that programme, not a single word was mentioned reporting or explaining what has actually been said.

This is pathetic. Losing our nerves in this manner can only give credibility to the other side and provide unnecessary publicity to the whole affair. We either report word by word what has been said and repudiate it also word by word. Or, on the other hand, if such "venom" does not deserve a response — as we have claimed — then we do not dedicate entire newspapers attacking it (without reporting what was said). It reminded me of the day our newspapers were plastered with attacks against Mustafa Tlas for apparently making similar remarks. Also then, not a single word of his remarks was quoted. The

biggest publicity to Tlas' comments was, again, on the pages of Jordanian newspapers.

If we really want to raise the banner of democracy and freedom of speech, we need to grow up and realise what it entails. In a democracy, we have to be prepared to hear things that we loathe and statements that we consider insulting and factually incorrect from people whom we despise. But we have to learn to accept that such opinions must be allowed to be said and possibly aired and published (the only exception being incitements to public disorder or immorality or threats to national security). In such a situation, our only weapon is to have an equal chance — which we have — to soberly respond to them and refute them by all democratic means available. Otherwise, if we do not wish to address such statements, then we better refrain from mentioning them altogether.

Zaid O. Nabulsi,
Geneva

opinion 150

Justice on tap

By David Sharrock

THE FIRST of the winter rains fell in the West Bank and Israel this weekend, sweet relief after the driest season more than 30 years. In the Middle East water shortage spells sickness, poor crops — and, perhaps one day, war.

The waters trickling through the limestone aquifers below the West Bank provide a powerful undercurrent to the peace-making process. Water is easily the most immediate problem facing ordinary Palestinians.

In the village of Eza'im, in the eastern lee of the Mount of Olives, 8,000 Palestinians wonder where the water supply will come from. Eza'im is set in a kind of West Bank no-man's land, bordering Jerusalem and between two rapidly growing Jewish settlements. Its residents know that their future is limited by whatever peace agreement finally emerges.

Mutasam Fahlan, aged 24, said the summer had been truly miserable. "Sometimes we only got water once a week, in the middle of the night. I was waiting until 3 a.m. with the tap open, waiting to see the water run."

A local wealthy Palestinian contractor — or "collaborator" as the villagers call him — has a deal with the Israeli-controlled Jerusalem municipality to run a water pipe. Mr. Fahlan said: "The Israelis control the pipe, so one day they open it and another they close it. Most

closures happen in the summer so they can keep it for themselves. In winter they don't care because there's plenty of water."

Even on a good day, pressure is so low meagre that water does not reach many homes, unless they have their own pumps.

Nasser, a successful food wholesaler

who supplies Jewish settlement supermarkets in the West Bank, dug his own water tank at the bottom of a slope. It fills with rain or he buys water from the bedouin who bring giant tankers. They charge 150 shekels — about £50 — for 600 litres, far more than Israelis pay.

Nasser said: "The Jews monopolise the water. Just look at their places. You see a lot of green spaces. Then look at us. It's as if we still live in the desert, not on its edge."

Haim Gvirtzman, a settler living at Dolev north of Jerusalem, is one of Israel's leading hydrologists. His maps of "Israeli interests in Judea and Samaria" — the West Bank — be vital in the final status negotiations.

Study of the maps shows a pattern of settlement construction since the 1970s along the ridges and edges of aquifers, suggesting that this strategic consideration was part of the Jewish pattern in populating the area.

Dr. Gvirtzman admits that the West Bank's water sources, known as the Mountain aquifer, is the largest and most important reservoir for Israeli proper. Some 600 million cubic metres are produced in an average year, about a third of Israel's water consumption.

Since the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza, the Palestinians have sunk hundreds of new wells: An area housing only 50,000 people before 1948 is now one of the world's most densely populated. Because of over demand, Gaza's ground water level is sinking by 6-8 inches a year.



Waiting to fill bottles from the spring that is the only source of water in Ein Arik (file photo)

and water quality is deteriorating. Gaza, bordering the Mediterranean and at the end of the water chain, is strategically insignificant to Israel, which has sunk its own wells on Gaza's eastern edge, depriving the territory of the precious commodity.

But the West Bank is another matter. Dr. Gvirtzman argues: "The vital need to prevent wildcat drilling by Palestinians, and the need to ensure the supply of good quality water, requires exclusive Israeli control of the vital pumping areas."

But Jad Isaac, of the Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem, has

conducted exhaustive surveys of water use by Palestinians and Israelis. He found that Israel exploits more than 80 per cent of what he calls Palestine's water.

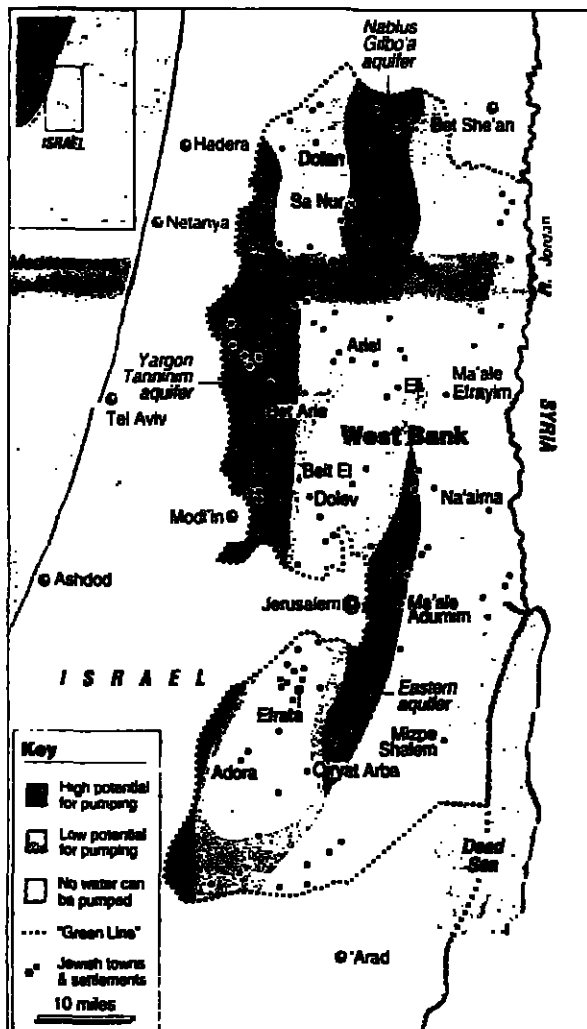
Irrigated agriculture constitutes less than 6 per cent of the total Palestinian cultivated areas. Some 39 per cent of the total water for agricultural use is extracted by Jewish settlements in the West Bank, while 26 per cent of Palestinian homes have no water.

Each Israeli consumes an average of 370 cubic metres of water a year, compared with each Palestinian's 107. Agriculture provides only 6 per cent

of Israel's GDP and 3.5 per cent of employment, yet 47 per cent of the country's cultivated land is irrigated. All but 6 per cent of Palestinian land is purely rain-fed, yet agriculture accounts for nearly a third of its GNP.

Mr. Isaac said: "Current water allocations have been taken by force. A settlement is required that respects international law. If water allocation continues to be addressed with an eye for might rather than justice Arabs will remain the thirsty partner to an unjust peace."

— The Guardian



Regional

Conference investigates role of religion in modernity

TWENTY-FOUR distinguished scholars from across the globe representing various academic disciplines — anthropology, political science, history and religious studies — assembled in Amman, from 12-15 October, for the conference, "Religion and Community: Cross-cultural Patterns of Coexistence and Conflict in Contemporary Society." The conference was sponsored by the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies (RIIFS) under the patronage of HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent.

By L. Michael Spath

"RELIGION AND COMMUNITY" centred on the presentation of case studies from regions and societies where religion — as institution, as ideology, as belief, as praxis — has had an impact on mutual distrust and the escalation of conflict, or conversely, the easing of tensions and conflict resolution.

In his opening presentation, Dr. Gerald Obermeyer, Research Fellow in the Department of Anthropology at Boston University, set the tone for the conference by

offering a definition of the central terms, "religion" and "community," and the many levels for understanding each. Each individual, Obermeyer suggested, lives in a multitude of communities simultaneously, where his or her religious beliefs, themselves a complex mixture of tradition and self-interpretation, play a variety of roles. There are also many dimensions to the relationship between religion and community. In many ways, religions function as communities within communities, or across community boundaries, while community identity is often

reinforced by religious symbols. Yet this relationship is a complex one, particularly when religions believe they must stand against the state for moral or other reasons.

Obermeyer raised issues of technology, the power of kinship and blood ties, the traditionally central role of women as "repositories of religion," the development of religious self-consciousness within humanity, and the role of belief. He asked the assembly to consider whether religion, necessarily leads to a dualism in the individual's (or community's) structuring of their real-

ity, into kin and strangers, allies and enemies, believer and infidel, human and non-human. He wondered whether this might be the cause of the de-humanisation of the "other" in times of conflict. Yet, he also inquired, how does this explain the other side of religion: Altruism, friendship and service to others? These fundamental issues, the conference participants discovered, underlay each of the presentations.

A sample of the case studies will reveal both the breadth and depth of the conference.

Prof. Sharifah Zuleha binte Syed Hassan, of the University of Kebangsaan Malaysia, explored religious factionalism in a suburban community in Malaysia. Two rival Muslim groups vie for the allegiance of this community, one through orthodox Islam which has accommodated itself to consumerism, and the other, the Al Anwar movement, through a revivalist Islam with an anti-capitalist social outlook.

Dr. Klaus Peter Kroepping, from the University of Heidelberg, discussed the syncretistic ability of Japanese traditional religion to assimilate new, indigenous religious movements (shinko shuyou), permitting believers to simultaneously belong to a number of belief systems. He suggested that with the rise of individualism, the loosening of family ties, and the atomisation of life in Japan, these religious groups offer an alternative universe of meaningfulness, and "network of relations" which have replaced the traditional institutions of neighbourhood, temple and extended family.

Dr. Peter Gutber, president of American Near East Refugee Aid, examined the Jordanian town of Al-Karak. He presented this community as a successful example of a culturally pluralistic society, with a substantial Muslim majority, yet with a fully participating and integrated Christian minority.

Prof. Gilles Kepel, of the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherche Internationale in Paris, discussed identity formation among Muslims in Europe, as the first generation of Muslim immigrants gives way to new generations of European-born. European-educated Muslims socialised to a new environment. He focused his attention on the Indo-Pakistani Muslim popu-

lation in Britain, the mainly North African Muslim population in France, and the largely Turkish Muslim population in Germany.

Prof. John Saliba, S.J., from the University of Detroit Mercy, explored the appearance of three relatively new religious sects in the United States — the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, the Aetherius Society (a UFO religion), and the Promise Keepers (an evangelical Christian organisation). He focused on their efforts to create new kinds of community to counteract the alienation they believe has come from cultural and religious pluralism.

The assembled participants agreed that any discussion of religion and community must include the view of religion as not only faith and belief, but

also as a "symbol-making system," and an "authorising discourse," since the power dimension of religion cannot be minimised. As one of the participants put it, "one cannot properly understand communities or religions without paying attention to the state dimension. There has historically been a coexistence: today the relationship between the state and religion is problematic. The politics of identity and legitimacy, the relationship between religion and the state, has to deal with this if either want to survive."

Professor Saliba, director of RIIFS, summarised the conference this way. "Methodologically, we purposely did not impose theory on the conference. But we are hopeful that the theory can be 'tweaked out' of the information in the

presentations. This is really the only proper way to go about the study of these social and political and religious communities." The papers of the conference, then, will be published in book form in early 1999 by RIIFS, with an introduction by Obermeyer. With these case studies of multi-cultural communities who live together or dispute with each other as data, he will suggest commonalities, diagnoses, and strategies which could be actively helpful when these situations arise elsewhere. As Saliba stated, "First the data, then the theory."

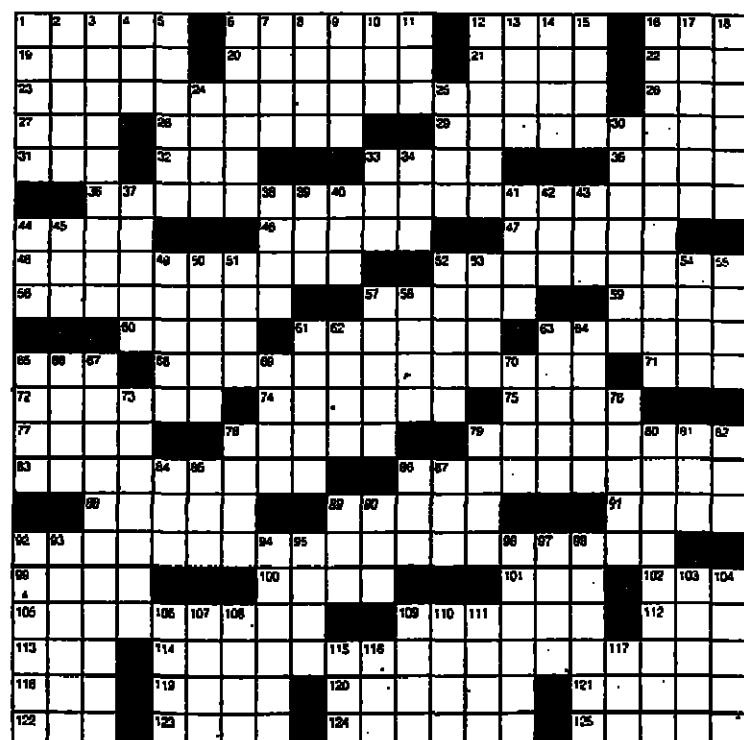
The writer is a Fulbright Fellow at the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies (RIIFS). For further information contact RIIFS (tel: 4618185) or e-mail info@riifs.org

The Saturday Crossword

ACTING CLASS

By Ed Voile, Gillette, Wyoming

- ACROSS
- Common garden pest
 - Largest part of the former Yugoslavia
 - Fifth of MOOX
 - Collision attendees, for short
 - Simoleons
 - Beboos, at times
 - Ancient Greek philosopher, Zeno of
 - Suffix in linguistics
 - Part 1 of a quotation
 - the season to
 - Cumblers' risk
 - Day's end
 - Field of moles?
 - Onassos to pals
 - Mine ven
 - Legendary founder of Carthage
 - Square measure
 - Part 2 of the quotation
 - Got an A
 - Underground growth
 - Strong dislike
 - Intentional
 - Superlatively acid
 - Part 3 of the quotation
 - Fury
 - Extremely severe
 - Noun-forming suffix
 - Lively pace
 - "Lawrence of..."
 - "The Phantom of the Opera" writer Leroux
 - Madagascar's neighbor, abbr.
 - Species of the quotation
 - RR stop
 - Saltsty
 - Counsel
 - Sea eagles
 - Cloth connection
 - Pack animals
 - Part 4 of the quotation
 - Assault
 - Spicy topping
 - Pen of old
 - Common infant
 - malady
 - Close-fitting
 - Part 5 of the quotation
 - Writer Dinesen
 - Medical school sub.



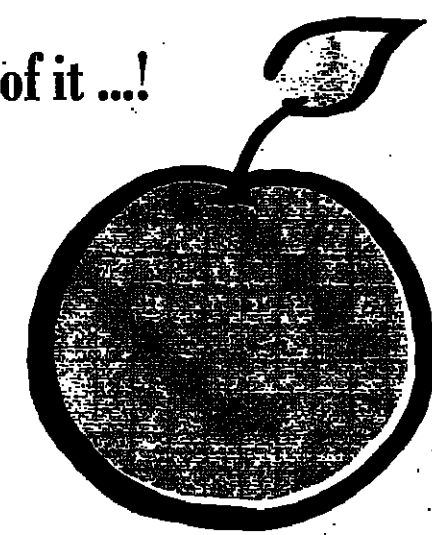
- DOWN
- One-called organism
 - Model, at times
 - With aggressive intent
 - Island, Fr.
 - "Cheese" star
 - Act parts
 - Aphrodite's child
 - Abundant
 - Encircling route
 - Curly
 - Comparison phrase
 - Morelty enforcer
 - Cut short
 - 1 came: Latin
 - Othello's nemesis
 - Separations
 - Political refugee
 - Be appropriate for
 - Remedy
 - Make over
 - Characters
 - Period
 - Contingencies
 - Nitty
 - Parsa, now
 - Drunkard
 - Lower digit
 - Ancient Egyptian
 - NYC summer fns.
 - Even score
 - Want
 - Bus, honcho
 - Small towns
 - French school
 - Cost per unit
 - Comic Fanny
 - Writer Dinesen
 - Glaswegian
 - Neighbor of Art.

— Last Sunday's Crossword Solved

ACROSS

- 1 Common garden pest
- 2 Largest part of the former Yugoslavia
- 3 Fifth of MOOX
- 4 Collision attendees, for short
- 5 Simoleons
- 6 Beboos, at times
- 7 Ancient Greek philosopher, Zeno of
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- 42 Pen of old
- 43 Common infant
- 44 malady
- 45 Close-fitting
- 46 Part 5 of the quotation
- 47 Writer Dinesen
- 48 Glaswegian
- 49 Neighbor of Art.

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Arab banks need mergers to face economic slowdown

BEIRUT (R) — Arab banks must consolidate to survive in a world economy battered by financial crises but protectionism and poor accounting standards are hindering attempts at financial cooperation, financiers said.

Speaking at an Arab banking conference which opened in Beirut Thursday, the experts said Middle East economies would feel the pinch of falling oil prices and the economic slowdown which was caused by the Russian and Asian financial crises.

"The growth of banks anywhere in the world is tied to the growth of the economy," said Paul Raphael, managing director of investment banking and capital markets at Merrill Lynch.

"What needs to be done on the Arab banking scene is not so much on the regulatory front. They must come to terms with the fact that they need to consolidate, to merge. Banks have such expensive requirements and so much competition that it doesn't make sense to have a small bank any more," he told Reuters.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) cut back world economic growth prospects for 1998 to two per cent from 3.1 per cent forecast earlier in the spring. In 1997, the world economy grew at 4.1 per cent.

Joseph Torbay, vice chairman of the Arab Banks Union, told the conference the current economic situation made globalisation and cooperation between Arab states necessary.

But financiers said closed financial markets, lack of transparency and power struggles stood in the way of mergers between banks in one country, let alone in other Arab states.

"Arab banks should understand that foreign competition is going to come sooner or later and that mergers are the way to go, especially as international banks are expanding," Nassib Ghobril, assistant manager at the research arm of investment bank Lebanon Invest, told Reuters.

"It's a positive thing for Arab banking markets but I don't see it happening across borders because of different regulators and different structures where foreign banks are treated in a totally different way than local ones," he said.

"Arab banks have to start taking globalisation and transparency into consideration," Ghobril added.

Financial analysts said Lebanon's banking system was the most open and transparent in the region. But in a recent report, Moody's Investor Service said the whole financial system was jeopardised by banks' huge treasury bill holdings.

The report said that Lebanon was "overbanked" and that mergers or purchases of "fading banks could be a good way for larger banks to maintain and expand their market share."

Andrew Cunningham of Moody's Middle East division warned mergers in the Arab World do not necessarily spell prosperity.

Quiet week expected at AFM

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Despite a tangible decline in the stock market's turnover, the bourse's price index recorded a 1.75 point increase in the past week compared to the previous week figures, a broker said Friday.

The stock market's weekly bulletin showed that turnover amounted to JD4.6 million compared to JD11.4 million a week ago, a 59.6 per cent drop. Average daily turnover amounted to JD920,000 compared to JD2.3 million in the previous week.

The general price index closed at 162.7 points compared to 160.98 points a week ago, the bulletin showed.

While bank and insurance share prices increased by 4.7 points and 0.58 points respectively, industrial and services share prices decreased by 0.41 and 1.03 points.

Naim Nageeb, a broker at the Amman Financial Market (AFM), attributed the increase in the price index to the rise in the Arab Bank share price, which closed at JD206.50 for a JD3.5 increase.

Nageeb stressed that "calm trading" will prevail in the AFM this week reflecting negative impact from Friday's bombing in occupied Jerusalem and the stand-off between Iraq and the U.N.

He was referring to the explosion in the heart of Jerusalem, where at least 3 people were killed and six others were injured.

The AFM's bulletin showed that the banking sector in the organised market won JD2.12 million, or 46.5 per cent of the turnover as shares of 15 banks were traded with seven of them recording higher prices and six registering losses.

The Housing Bank won 19 per cent of the turnover followed by the Arab Bank, 9.2 per cent, and Jordan National Bank with seven per cent, Nageeb said.

The broker noted that a major deal on the Housing Bank shares, concluded on Tuesday, formed 16 per cent of the AFM's turnover.

The industrial sector ranked second with JD1.8 million, or 39.6 per cent, with 38 firms changing hands in the stock market with 14 recording increase in their prices and 11 registering decline in their prices.

Trading in this sector focused on the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company, which recorded 16.4 per cent of the turnover, followed by the Arab Potash, eight per cent, and Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing, three per cent.

Services and insurance sectors won three per cent and 0.6 per cent respectively, Nageeb said.

Parallel market accounted for 10.8 per cent of the turnover as shares of 30 firms were traded with 12 recording increase and shares of nine others slipping down.

Trading in this sector focused on Namico and Century Group, with both of them winning 4.4 per cent of the total turnover.

Out of the 97 firms that changed hands in the stock market, 38 companies recorded increase, 32 firms registered decrease and 27 others witnessed no change in their prices, the bulletin said.

Exchange Rates

Thursday, November 05, 1998

ACCESS 444888

Currency	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
JORDAN DINAR	1.0000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8778	1.8390	0.1844	2.3430
BAHRAIN DINAR	5.2380	1.0000	1.0212	9.9491	9.7429	1.0302	12.4131
U.A.E. DIRHAM	6.1881	0.9783	1.0000	9.7427	9.5408	1.0088	12.1557
QATAR RIAL	0.5325	0.1005	0.1025	1.0000	0.9793	0.1035	1.2477
KUWAIT DINAR	0.5438	0.1028	0.1048	1.0212	1.0000	0.1055	1.2741
LIBYAN DINAR	5.1429	0.9707	0.9913	8.8578	8.4577	1.0000	12.0495
EGYPT POUND	0.4288	0.0806	0.0823	0.8019	0.7849	0.0830	1.0000
SUDANESE LIRA	4.8970	0.9130	0.9323	9.0833	8.8951	0.9405	11.3330
IRANIAN RIAL	21.4531	4.0549	4.1408	40.3427	38.5086	4.1772	50.3342
YEMENI RIAL	1.4124	0.2658	0.2722	2.6524	2.5974	0.2748	3.3083
BRITISH POUND	0.8516	0.1607	0.1641	1.5993	1.5681	0.1656	1.9953
GERMAN MARK	2.3516	0.4438	0.4533	4.4159	4.3244	0.4572	5.5098
FRANCO FRANK	1.2281	0.3639	0.3716	3.6208	3.5457	0.3748	4.5178
ITALY LIRA	7.8411	1.4800	1.5114	14.7247	14.4195	1.5246	18.3715
JAPAN YEN	1.9803	0.3134	0.3200	3.1178	3.0632	0.3228	3.8901
HOLLAND GUILDER	2.8511	0.5004	0.5110	4.9785	4.8753	0.5155	6.2115
SWEDEN KRONA	11.0213	2.0803	2.1243	20.6988	20.2878	2.1430	26.8227
US DOLLAR	23.2871	4.3917	4.4847	43.6929	42.7873	4.5241	54.5142
FRANCE FRANC	48.5071	9.1557	9.3496	91.0907	89.2028	9.4318	113.6508
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	2.2303	0.4210	0.4299	4.1882	4.1014	0.4337	5.2255
NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR	3.9800	0.7475	0.7633	7.4639	7.2823	0.7700	9.2782
INDONESIA RUPIAH	2.8782	0.5453	0.5548	5.4059	5.2630	0.5587	6.7437
CYPRUS POUND	16.5208	3.1240	3.1901	31.0806	30.4384	3.2182	38.7782
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	2.1628	0.4083	0.4150	4.0428	3.9580	0.4186	5.0440
CANADA DOLLAR	1.1989	0.2259	0.2307	2.2476	2.2010	0.2327	2.8042

SUPER MAKE
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DAJANI
Jewellers

At Amman Forum Hotel Shopping Center
Phone: 5527118 Fax: 5527119

Invitation For Bid

1- AL- Hussam Plastics Industries Co. Ltd. has received a grant from the Multilateral Funds in U.S. Dollar towards the cost of ODSs phasing out and it is intended that proceeds of this grant will be applied to eligible payments under the contract for ODSs phase out project.

2- AL- Hussam Plastics now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply of a complete line for producing Polystyrene sheets using LPG as a blowing agent.

3- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and a complete set of bidding documents at the office of AL-Hussam Plastics (Marka = / Zarqa Amman High Way / Tel: 4889228 Fax: 4891648) upon payment of non-refundable amount of twenty JDs

4- Last date to submit your offer on or before 12:00 noon on 25/11/1998.

5- Tender should be submitted in sealed envelopes and to be addressed as follows:

Tender: Supplying EPS Extrusion Line for AL- Hussam Plastics Ind. Co. Ltd.
The General Corporation for Environment Protection
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
P.O. BOX. 1408 Amman 11941 Jordan

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

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Dr. Smith is delighted to be visiting Jordan and will give a presentation and be available for consultation at:

The British Council Library & Information Services
6:30pm Tuesday 10th November

2:00pm - 6:00pm Wednesday 11th November

10:00am - 6:00pm Thursday 12th November

counselling sessions

For appointments and enquiries contact:

Miss Ruba Zakaria
The British Council
Tel: 46361478

e-mail: ruba.zakaria@bc-amman.sprint.com

The University of Aberdeen is very happy to welcome Undergraduate and Postgraduate students from Jordan. Degree programmes are available in Engineering, Computer Science, Law, Management Studies, Finance, Economics, Accountancy, Medicine, Medical, Biological and Environmental Sciences and Applied Sciences in addition to a wide range of other Arts and Sciences.

Doctors interested in professional Clinical Training (MRCP, FRCS, etc.) should NOT consult Dr Smith but should consult the British Council.

The British Council

First Circle, Jabel Amman

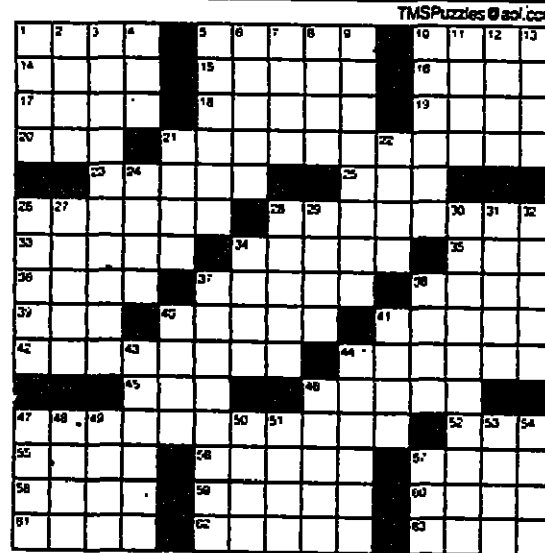
Registered in England as a charity no. 209131

THE Daily Crossword

Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- 1 Type size
- 2 Tree branch
- 3 Identical
- 4 Unknown auth.
- 5 Ice abode
- 6 Trebek of "Jeopardy"
- 7 Aberdeen native
- 8 "The Screens" dramatist
- 9 "Peter Pan" dog
- 10 Old salt
- 11 Queens' diamond
- 12 Garters
- 13 Poetic above
- 14 Muddies
- 15 Air currents
- 16 Star over Madrid
- 17 Sheepette?
- 18 Fills with reverence
- 19 Like some bogs
- 20 Duncie dagger
- 21 Baseball's Ripken
- 22 Small valleys
- 23 Cut
- 24 Fire-hose connections
- 25 Aiment
- 26 In imitation of Lulu
- 27 Seattle diamond
- 28 New G.I.
- 29 Indonesian island
- 30 Garlic section
- 31 Monty or Huntz
- 32 Donations to the poor
- 33 Conger catcher
- 34 Field of study
- 35 Hashanah
- 36 Prognosticators
- 37 Give a bias to
- 38 DOWN
- 39 Gone by
- 40 Early Peruvian
- 41 Denver diamond
- 42 Syn's opposite
- 43 Shoreline



By Matthew Higgins

Concord, NH

curves

6 Molding curves

7 Arm bone

8 Departs

9 Cold-weather drink

10 O'Connor of the Supreme Court

11 Jal

12 Salary choices

13 Pop-quiz

14 Wise guy

15 Dynamic star?

16 Whale groups

17 Seaside sand

18 Brontos' John

19 Arctic to Kazakhstan range

20 Sajak and Conroy

21 Back Bay diamond

22 Intamous political boss

23 Worn and shabby

24 Bombard

25 Acts of contrition

26 Move goods

27 Artist Salvador

28 Healthy

29 Dissolute

30 Charades participants

31 Channel port

32 Silt rid

33 Nimbus

34 Shade trees

35 Delight

36 1996 election

37 Escape

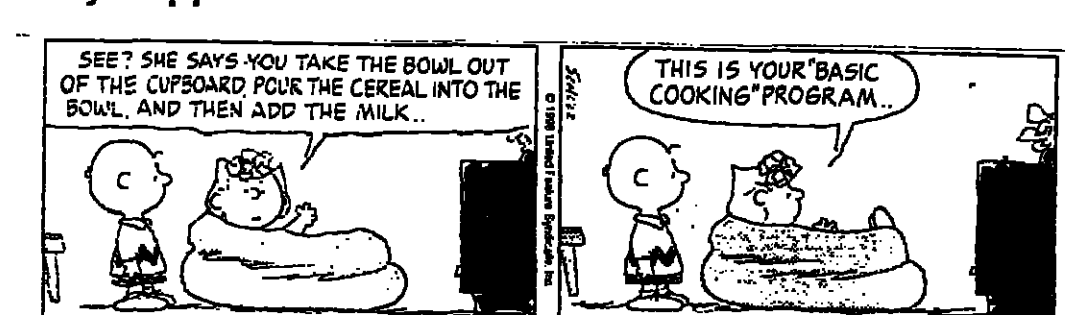
38 Hammer type

39 Possesses

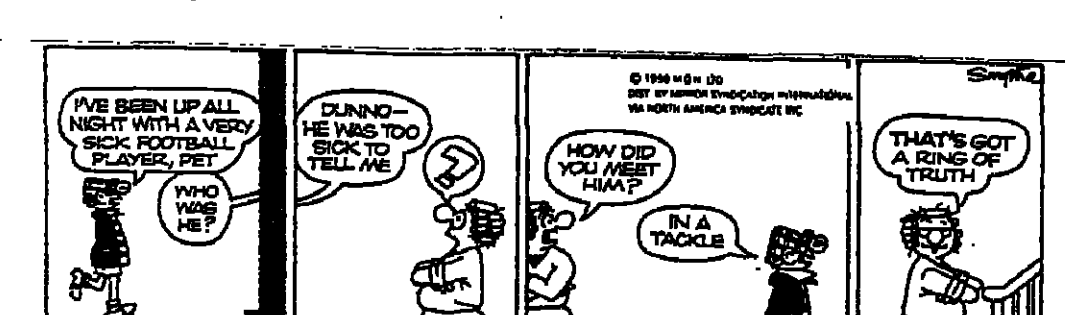
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



THE BETTER HALF.

By Glasbergen



"Married all these years and he still doesn't trust me. When I try to kiss him, he thinks I'm going to steal his gum."

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

COUPH

UNFYN

YIFFEG

FROBEE

Print answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: CHAFF BATCH BEDBUG HAWKER
Answer: What the pirate turned farmer charged for his corn - A BUCK AN EAR (BUCCANEER)

A review of new Sugar P

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...the new Sugar P...

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Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Sugar prices decline

SUGAR PRICES have declined sharply since the beginning of last week, falling by JD20 to JD220 per tonne, confirmed Nizar Darwazah, head of the association of foodstuff traders. He explained the decline was due to lower sugar prices on the international markets and the reflection of such a drop directly on local prices.

Moreover, Darwazah said, competition among importers of sugar helped lower the prices at this time because large amounts, exceeding local demand, were imported

recently and that reflected on prices going down. Two months ago, the price of sugar was around JD240 per tonne but the decline has reached JD20 per tonne until now.

Consumers have felt the decline in prices as some have confirmed buying a 50-kilogramme bag of sugar at JD11, JD2 lower than the sale price of JD13 before few weeks. Retailers were urged by some consumers to fully abide by the drop in prices and expressed the hope that more basic foodstuffs will be affected by lower prices (Al Arab Al Yawm).

Bank of Jordan readies procedures to cope with the launch of the euro

IN ORDER to be prepared for the launching of the euro and its impact on the European and international markets, the Bank of Jordan held a three-day workshop last week. Walid Fakhoury, executive manager of the treasury and investment department; Walid Anabtawi, executive manager of the operations department; and Mohammad Habash, the manager of the treasury and foreign exchange department demonstrated the expected impact of launching the euro on the global economic environment as a whole and specifically on the eleven states in the European Monetary Union (EMU). The workshop was attended by senior BOJ officials.

The lecturers explained the concept of the euro and gave an overview of the participating countries in the EMU. They also provided the audience with a historical background about the European Union and European Economic Agreements that were followed by the Master Treaty which established the legal and economic framework for the European Union. The different stages of transforming the national currencies of the 11 European countries into a single currency called they euro were outlined.

The official start of EMU will be on Jan. 1, 1999 when irrevocable fixing of conversion rates of the participating currencies will take place and the European Central Bank starts operations. On Jan. 1, 1999, the euro will be introduced in non-cash form.

On Jan. 4, 1999 the stock markets will start trading securities and make settlements in the euro currency. Jan. 1, 2002 will be the date of introduction of euro notes and coins. July 1, 2002 will be the date when domestic currencies in member countries lose legal tender status.

The lecturers also demonstrated the expected impact of the euro, since the euro reflects the composition of the EMU that will further consolidate European economic integration. The frequent exchange rate fluctuations between the currencies of the participating countries will be eliminated. This will facilitate exports and corporate investment decisions. A stable

single currency and a large internationally competitive financial market will strengthen Europe and enhance its ability to compete economically with the U.S. and Japan.

The introduction of the euro is expected to have a major impact on the securities pending business. Economic and monetary union will likely lead to increased trading activity in both the bond and equity markets across Europe through the reduction and stabilisation of interest rates and inflation, as well as the removal of foreign exchange risk through the introduction of a common currency.

Nevertheless, some difficulties and implications regarding the practical implementation of shifting to the euro, are expected to face both the European Union and international financial institutions.

Banks are expected to face a drop in profitability of foreign exchange operation. Mergers and acquisitions between European banks on the one hand, and between international and European banks on the other hand are expected to occur.

Fakhoury assured the attending participants that Bank of Jordan will be able to meet all the needs of BOJ's customers regarding the launching of the euro when the time comes.

He indicated that the great efforts are being made by the bank to upgrade the systems to cope with the new procedures concerning the euro. The legal and technical procedures are being modified to deal with the changes caused by using the euro instead of the current 11 European currencies.

Fakhoury explained that the bank is going to open euro accounts for its clients. Through these euro accounts the clients will be able to trade or deposit in any of the 11 European currencies, side by side with the euro.

He emphasised that BOJ will be ready by the end of this year to help its clients make a smooth transition to the euro. To support this goal, an educational promotional campaign on the euro and the proper ways to deal with it, will be launched in line with BOJ's policy towards its clients.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - JORDAN

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ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (31/10/1998 - 04/11/1998)

WEEKLY REPORT

DATE THE LAST 3 WEEKS		COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES EXCHANGED	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE MARKET PRICE	TURNOVER SHARES	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
DATE	LOW														
09.250	200.000	ARAB BANK	16.9	0.47	79	2000	421970	203.00	208.00	203.00	206.50	+ 3.50	205.848	.023	5
1.550	1.500	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	13.6	0.11	97	195426	330658	1.55	1.72	1.55	1.67	+ .12	1.695	.464	5
2.850	2.850	CAIRO ARAB BANK	11.2	0.17	2	100	1084	2.85	2.71	2.71	2.71	- .14	2.710	.092	1
1.140	1.030	BANK OF JORDAN	-	0.00	16	8010	8521	1.04	1.07	1.05	1.06	+ .02	1.064	.038	4
.990	.950	MID. EAST INV. BK.	66.3	0.04	1	300	3028	.96	1.01	.98	1.01	- .05	1.007	.038	2
1.550	1.470	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.2	0.10	14	1100	5962	1.47	1.46	1.45	1.46	- .01	1.454	.017	3
2.850	2.610	THE HOUSING BK.	12.3	0.18	101	309544	816202	2.71	2.91	2.72	2.79	+ .08	2.896	.303	5
1.850	1.700	JOR. ESTATE BANK	1.0	0.00	11	105871	247974	1.85	1.76	1.68	1.68	- .17	1.700	.129	2
.600	.560	JOR. GULF BANK	-	0.00	104	110674	70098	.60	.65	.60	.64	+ .04	.633	.553	5
2.160	1.900	ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	42.7	0.14	6	10000	21000	2.16	2.10	2.10	2.10	- .06	2.100	.050	1
1.710	1.540	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	16.0	0.00	44	10246	16145	1.59	1.61	1.56	1.57	+ .02	1.577	.047	5
.950	.900	UNION BK. SAV. INV.	143.5	0.00	6	20892	17774	.92	.90	.85	.90	- .02	.851	.104	2
1.640	1.400	JOR. INV. FID. BANK	21.5	0.00	1	1000	1000	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.40	- .00	1.399	.002	1
.700	.670	BRIT. AL. PAL. (BEITWA)	3.3	0.00	4	1850	1238	.67	.68	.66	.68	+ .01	.669	.093	2
.440	.590	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	937.5	0.00	84	170356	104234	.61	.62	.60	.61	- .01	.612	1.104	5
BANKS															
3.000	2.950	JORDAN INSURANCE	12.7	0.08	2	515	1578	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	- .00	2.950	.011	2
2.650	2.600	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	7.5	0.26	1	500	1119	2.60	2.70	2.65	2.70	+ .10	2.678	.023	1
INSURANCE															
1.450	1.410	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.2	0.01	50	24510	34099	1.42	1.45	1.42	1.42	- .00	1.431	.123	5
2.100	1.900	UNCL. OWNERS FID.	7.4	0.64	2	1100	2010	1.90	1.85	1.80	1.80	- .10	1.845	.092	2
1.620	1.460	SHIPPING LINES	42.0	0.12	4	1150	1438	1.46	1.39	1.19	1.19	- .27	1.250	.017	4
.730	.620	NATL. PORTFOLIO	29.9	0.00	51	46100	34917	.72	.76	.73	.75	+ .03	.748	.934	5
.730	.720	REAL ESTATE INV.	13.9	0.00	2	1450	1041	.72	.72	.71	.71	- .01	.718	.031	2
.270	.260	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	-	0.00	1	150	19	.27	.26	.26	.26	- .01	.260	.004	1
5.410	5.220	ALARA	7.0	0.04	2	200	1070	5.22	5.10	5.10	5.10	- .12	5.100	.007	1
1.890	1.870	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	9.4	0.11	14	26900	50499	1.89	1.90	1.88	1.90	+ .01	1.885	.133	5
.860	.860	SARBA EDUCATION	19.8	0.00	1	100	86	.86	.86	.86	.86	- .00	.860	.002	1
1.110	1.070	UNIFIED CO.	4.9	0.00	30	10300	11289	1.08	1.11	1.08	1.10	+ .02	1.096	.206	4
.900	.470	UNION LAMB DEV.	-	0.00	1	250	123	.47	.49	.49	.49	+ .02	.492	.005	1
1.170	.960	UNIFIED FOR FINAN. INV.	1.2	0.17	2	350	338	.96	1.00	.95	.95	- .03	.966	.018	1
SERVICES															
1.100	1.100	ATYMOORE	-	0.00	10	18325	20157	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	- .00	1.100	.654	2
1.290	1.050	JOR. PHOTOGRAPHY	12.1	0.00	298	61039	75041	1.16	1.26	1.14	1.14	- .02	1.150	1.414	5
2.700	3.450	ARAB POTASH CO.	16.7	0.00	31	108750	368237	3.45	3.45	3.30	3.40	- .05	3.386	.131	5
10.650	10.070	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	9.9	0.73	67	6174	68921	10.15	10.20	10.13	10.18	+ .03	10.174	.106	5
5.150	4.900	JORDAN TANNING	6.5	0.00	4	128	3842	5.15	5.30	5.25	5.30	+ .15	5.277	.073	2
1.180	1.120	INDUSTRIAL CONGR. AGR.	63.2	0.00	19	3559	3861	1.18	1.12	1.07	1.07	- .11	1.085	.071	5
5.700	5.550	JOR. MORTGAGE BILLS	7.4	0.00	1	5000	28750	5.65	5.65	5.65	5.65	- .00	5.650	.125	1
.730	2.400	ARAB PHARM. IND.	7.0	0.00	143	50042	142919	2.56	2.64	2.55	2.55	- .01	2.596	.306	5
.080	1.000	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	4.4	0.00	4	3100	3191	1.00	1.03	1.02	1.02	+ .02	1.029	.062	2
2.750	2.650	JORDAN DAIRY	6.3	0.00	3	1137	3166	2.75	2.80	2.80	2.80	+ .05	2.797	.065	2
1.100	1.040	JOR. PAPER MANUFACT.	9.0	0.17	6	1624	1769	1.07	1.09	1.08	1.09	+ .02	1.089	.050	2
2.010	2.050	JOR. PAPER CARDBO.	11.0	0.00	1	100	195	2.05	1.95	1.95	1.95	- .10	1.950	.003	1
1.010	1.430	GENERAL MINING	98.2	0.00	2	350	490	1.43	1.40	1.40	1.40	- .03	1.400	.035	1
6.450	6.650	ARAB CHEM. OUTRICH.	7.6	0.00	2	150	1023	6.65	6.85	6.80	6.85	+ .20	6.820	.023	1
5.200	4.950	DAR ALMAH. DEV. INV.	6.1	0.00	7	2488	13627	5.05	5.10	5.05	5.10	+ .05	5.068	.045	3
1.000	1.730	ARAB ALUM. IND.	12.9	0.00	6	900	1516	1.73	1.77	1.73	1.75	+ .02	1.751	.015	3
.380	.350	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	12.8	0.00	36	17500	6622	.37	.38	.37	.38	+ .01	.378	.530	5
.730	.700	ARAB PAPER CONV. IND.	21.4	0.00	2	500	70	.70	.70	.67	.70	- .03	.674	.023	1
.450	.450	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	-	0.00	12	17000	8065	.48	.48	.46	.46	- .02	.474	.425	4
.430	.360	NATIONAL INDS.	-	0.00	5	1080	416	.37	.41	.38	.41	+ .04	.385	.018	2
.300	.280	INTERNETED. PETRO. CHEM.	-	0.00	9	4150	1245	.30	.30	.30	.30	- .00	.300	.104	4
.350	.290	JOR. ROCKWELL INDS.	-	0.00	4	1350	462	.35	.36	.34	.35	- .01	.342	.045	2
1.120	.990	UNIV. CHEM. INDS.	10.7	0.00	18	2369	2474	1.06	1.08	1.02	1.05	- .01	1.044	.158	3
.680	.630	NATL. CABLE WIRE. NFAC	30.5	0.00	34	9650	6281	.66	.66	.65	.65	- .01	.651	.129	5
.390	.360	JOR. SUPPLY. CHEM.	7.0	0.00	9	4300	1591	.37	.37	.37	.37	- .00	.370	.096	2
1.220	1.160	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	12.2	0.00	37	16288	19775	1.20	1.24	1.20	1.20	- .04	1.214	.326	5
.390	.380	KANTHER INVEST.	-	0.00	2	1350	500	.38	.37	.37	.37	- .01	.370	.068	1
.630	.590	UNIV. MOUL. INDS.	9.6	0.00	35	20319	12262	.60	.62	.60	.60	- .02	.603	.339	5
.500	.420	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	-	0.00	202	293520	124060	.42	.45	.40	.43	+ .01	.423	3.666	5
1.240	1.160	NATL. ELECTRIC	8.4	0.20	11	30200	36834	1.17	1.23	1.21	1.22	+ .05	1.220	.419	2
.640	.600	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	8.5	0.16	37	32568	39110	.60	.63	.60	.60	- .03	.615	.795	5
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Jarrar wins final speed test, takes overall title

By Roufan Nahhas

AMMAN — Champion Yasser Jarrar enjoyed a double celebration Friday after being crowned 1998 Jordan Speed Test Drivers' Open Champion with 137.5 points following his first place finish in the final round of the Pepsi Speed Tests clocking 1:58.68 in his Renault 5GT Turbo.

Rival Edmer Shishani came second overall with 103 points and Khazik Shadian third with 101 points.

Shadian clinched second place in Friday's event clocking 1:59.15 in his Renault 5GT Turbo followed by Amir Najjar in third place with 2:00.07 in his Daihatsu Charade Gti.

Luck seemed to abandon Shishani, winner of the 7th round of the speed test, as

he took the ninth place in his Opel Ascona 2.0 clocking 2:06.11.

Held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Faisal, twenty drivers took part in the season's final speed test organised by the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ). The only woman driver Abeer Batkhi took 14th place clocking 2:10.11 in her Honda Civic.

Speed Tests champion for the 1997 season and winner of the 1998 Jordan Drivers Championship Ahmad Daoud did not take part in the event and settled for the 5th overall place with 82 points.

The 1998 season witnessed eight speed tests which were held at RACJ headquarters.

The speed test consists of two competitive time runs and a third run for the best ten times recorded for the day.

Cars are divided into classes according to their cubic capacity and any other modifications that might upgrade a certain car.

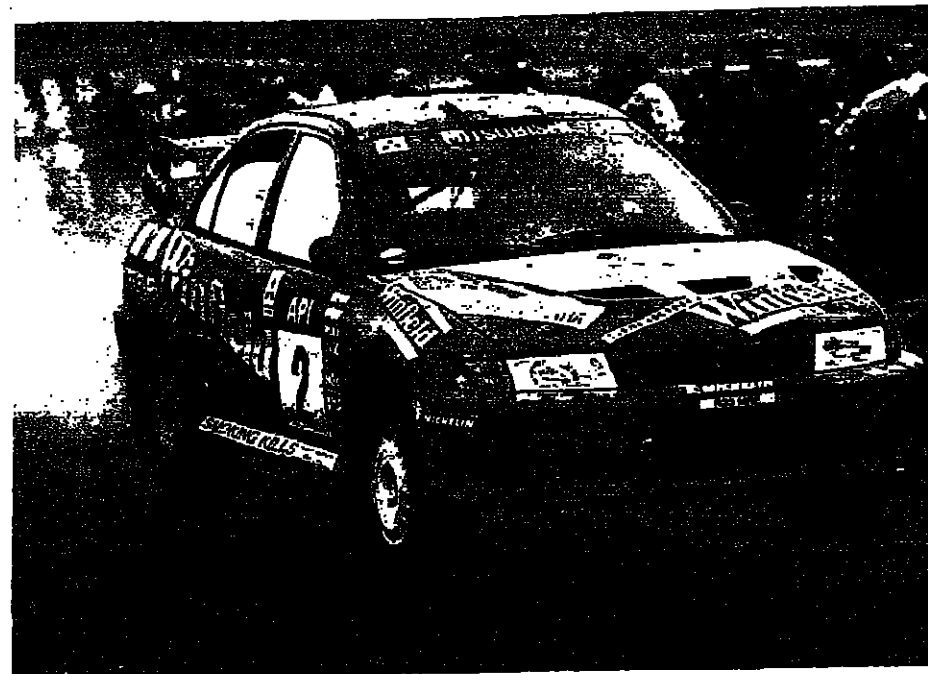
RACJ still has a final event to wrap up the 1998 season with a 4x4 rally to be held December 11th.

Meanwhile, Barkev Shadian surprised all and took the first place in the last round of Al Aswaq Cart Championship Friday.

Mahmoud Qomooq came second and Raed Karzoun took third place after an exciting ending which left Samir Rifai in fourth spot.

After Friday's results Mahmoud Qomooq was crowned champion of the Jordan Carving Championship for the 1998 season.

Raed Karzoun came second and Samir Rifai took third place.



Richard Burns of Great Britain is airborne as he competes during stage three of Rally Australia at Muresk, east of Perth Nov. 6 Burns and co-driver Robert Reid are currently leading after eight completed stages on day two, with Carlos Sainz of Spain in second position (AFP photo)

Ince escapes with fine

LONDON (AFP) — Paul Ince was Friday fined 1,500 pounds by the Football Association for making an abusive gesture after being sent off during England's Euro 2000 qualifier against Sweden — but has escaped a further suspension.

The Liverpool midfielder was found guilty of misconduct by an FA disciplinary commission for making a V-sign following his dismissal in the match in Stockholm on September 5.

An FA statement read: "At a hearing in Manchester, which the player did not attend, the commission reached its verdict after considering a letter from Paul Ince in which he apologised for his action."

"Both the player and Liverpool FC pointed out he had already been punished with a suspension by UEFA arising from the dismissal."

Ince was dismissed for a second bookable offence but, as he left the field, he gave the two-fingered gesture.

He later claimed it was made towards England's assistant coach John Gorman, but coach Glenn Hoddle later insisted that was not the case.

Ince was in more trouble this week when he was one of three players sent off during Liverpool's UEFA Cup match with Valencia in Spain.

Britain denies giving up on 2006 World Cup bid

LONDON (AFP) — British Prime Minister Tony Blair remains committed to England's bid to stage football's World Cup tournament in 2006, his office said Friday, denying reports that the government had given up.

Sports Minister Tony Banks described as "absolutely absurd" suggestions that Blair had withdrawn his active support from England's bid.

A Downing Street spokesman also dismissed the report that Blair had been advised to distance himself because the bid stood little chance of success.

According to Friday's Financial Times, the premier has pulled out because Sepp Blatter, the head of football's world governing body FIFA, has lent his weight to South Africa's bid.

But Banks told the BBC there was still everything to play for.

The ability of any African country to host the world's top competition still had to be demonstrated, and Banks argued that meant that England was still in with a very real chance.

In a meeting last month between Blair and Blatter, the FIFA chief said that England's bid "was a very strong one and a very competitive one," saying the prime minister "was hugely encouraged by what Sepp Blatter said."

Asked if Blair was fully behind the 2006 bid, he replied: "One hundred and ten per cent."

Downing Street made the same point.

"The prime minister has been right behind the bid from the start and continues to be so," the spokesman said.

"He met Sepp Blatter last month and he has invited the FIFA executive over to London as part of our continuing efforts to bring World Cup 2006 to England."

Last week, Blair told the House of Commons he was confident of England's chances of hosting the competition, while conceding South Africa appeared to be the favourites.

The last two contests have been held in the United States and France, and the 2002 competition is being hosted jointly by South Korea and Japan.

The Financial Times quoted a government member saying Blair "doesn't want to be too close to something likely to go the wrong way."

Laudrup deal close to being sealed

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — FC Copenhagen president Flemming Oestergaard hopes to finally sign home-sick Chelsea striker Brian Laudrup within the next five days.

Oestergaard said he is confident of a deal for Laudrup being signed before the end of next week.

Laudrup on Thursday night helped knock his future club out of the European Cup Winners' Cup in Denmark.

Laudrup has revealed his determination to return home after 10 years' spent playing abroad, yet was still included in the Blues' starting line-up.

He repaid manager Gianluca Vialli's faith in him by scoring the 32nd-minute goal that secured the holders' place in the quarter-finals of the competition after a 1-0 win in the second-round, second-leg tie.

Immediately after the match, Oestergaard distributed a statement which he had supplied to the Danish stock exchange.

He said: "I am going to London at the weekend and I expect to come back on Monday or Tuesday with Brian Laudrup after he has signed a contract with us."

Oestergaard explained that a deal had been agreed "in principle" but added that final details still needed to be sorted out with Chelsea before final contracts could be exchanged.

He expects Laudrup to appear for Chelsea in Sunday's English Premiership game at West Ham but he is confident that the former Danish international will be a Copenhagen player on December 1 and will play his first game for them when the Danish season restarts in March after a winter break.

Thailand optimistic over Games despite economic gloom

BANGKOK (AFP) — The one month countdown to the Asian Games started Friday with the Thai hosts determined that Asia's economic crisis and a problem-plagued build-up will not spoil the party.

Already, some of the 43 competing nations, Indonesia, Malaysia and other countries, have been forced to scale down their teams because of the economic turmoil that has hampered the region.

Thai organisers admit that advance ticket sales have fallen short of expectations with only 40 per cent of seats sold for the opening and closing ceremonies.

Thailand though, which has seen its currency plunge and its economy pummelled during the crisis, is refusing to be downcast, hinting the Asiad, billed as the last major games of the 20th century, can help to rebuild the region's damaged pride.

"We are ready to host a good Asian Games," said deputy prime minister Bhichai Rattakul, who chairs the Bangkok Asian Games Organising Committee (BAGOC).

"We will be able to show how we organise things here."

The run-up to the Games was blighted by fears that new venues would not be ready on time and predictions that athletes and officials could become mired in Bangkok's notorious traffic jams.

A vital expressway to take athletes and spectators to Games venues from the city-centre is still two weeks from completion, officials here said.

"Despite the economic crisis we are going to deliver on our obligations," BAGOC deputy secretary general Santiparb Tejavannija told AFP.

"We are ready for all these events — all the hardware is in place," he said, adding that all venues were ready for use.

Organisers are now expecting around 11,000 athletes and officials for the Games, which feature 36 sports and two demonstration events.

Among them will be Stalinist North Korea which skipped the 1994 games in Hiroshima but has vowed to bring almost 400 athletes and officials to Bangkok.

Organisers plans were hit this week with the news that

two of 11 major sponsors had failed to deliver promised cash, although the Games has attracted 3.9 billion baht (\$98.2 million) in sponsorship and other financial backing.

To plug a gap left by poor copyright and licensing revenue, the cabinet approved Tuesday a 500 million baht (\$13 million) extra budget for the Games.

An initial target of 330 million baht (\$9 million) for ticket sales has now been downgraded to 250 million, Bhichai said Wednesday.

But despite the shortfall, he still hopes the Games will make a profit.

"This was my thinking a few months back but I would be happy if we can make it even," Bhichai said, adding that he was hoping for more ticket sales or increased television revenue.

No international sporting event would be complete these days without a drugs controversy and the Asiad suffered its first with competition more than four weeks away when three South Korean medal hopes fell foul of doping rules.

A swimmer and two gymnasts were probably using diuretics to control their weight, officials in Seoul said.

China, which has been hit by a series of past doping scandals, is once more expected to dominate Asiad, aiming for 100 gold medals.

Host nation Thailand, keen for a performance to be proud of has called on its athletes to win 24 golds — eight times as many as in the Hiroshima games four years ago.

Rangers leave Germany without a team in UEFA Cup

GLASGOW (AFP) — Scottish giants Rangers left Germany without a team in the last 16 of the UEFA Cup for the first time when they held Bayer Leverkusen 1-1 at Ibrox on Thursday to win their second round tie 3-2 on aggregate.

Leverkusen dominated the match but Finnish striker Jonatan Johansson fired Rangers ahead after 56 minutes and Ulf Kirsten's 79th-minute equaliser on the night proved too little for the visitors, who were made to pay for their shock defeat in the first leg a fortnight ago.

The German side made a spirited start with the Dutchman Erik Meijer at the heart of things.

With Rangers pushing up for offside, Meijer scampared away only to see his shot blocked by

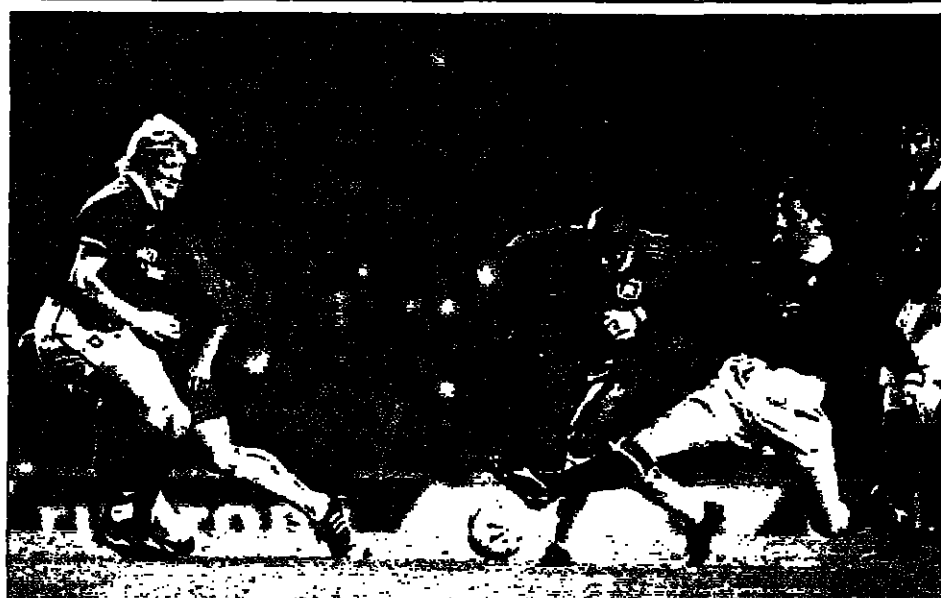
the home side's keeper Lionel Charbonnier.

Then he dragged another effort wide of the post after peeling away from Colin Hendry.

The Scottish league leaders howled for a penalty in the 15th minute when a clever back-heel by Andrei Kanchelskis caught the arm of Jens Nowotny. But Portuguese referee Lucilio Batista would have none of it.

Meijer again went close before Charbonnier had to look lively in beating away a 25-yard thunderbolt from Jan Heintze. Rangers almost took the lead on the stroke of half-time when Johansson headed high and wide following a delightful cross from Rod Wallace.

The home side went ahead against the run of



Colin Hendry (L) of Glasgow Rangers holds off a Bayer player as Ze Roberto (C) wins the ball from Barry Ferguson (R) in the Rangers v Bayer Leverkusen UEFA Cup second round, second leg match at the Ibrox stadium in Glasgow (AFP photo)

play with a stunning goal 10 minutes after the break.

Italian defender Lorenzo Amoroso launched a long ball forward and Johansson's pace took him clear. He had colleagues ready and waiting to be released but the young Finnish star, who also scored in the first leg, ignored them

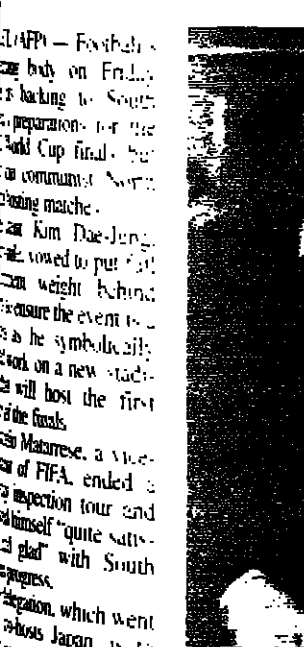
and struck a majestic curling shot into the corner beyond startled keeper Adam Matyssek.

The Germans, who had enjoyed so much possession, could scarcely believe it and neither could the partisan 50,000 crowd.

Leverkusen poured forward in search of the equaliser. It came in the

79th minute when substitute Thomas Reichenberger played the ball across the face of the goal and diminutive German international Kirsten knocked it home. Rangers were then forced to endure a seemingly interminable period of stoppage time but held out to celebrate a famous triumph.

FIFA happy



Dr. Antoni with Choi Korean W press ranking of ruled out of the 200 by South AFP photo

We war Korea but occasion." South Korea North Korea the 2002 fin Pyongyang matches. It never had a Football. The Head Chung Mo FIFA vice- hoped to vis state to disc

GOREN BRIDGE

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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

AQJ42 ♠ K85 ♠ AKJ983 ♠

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

1♠ Pass 1♥ Pass

What do you bid now?

A - If you are used to rebidding a suit and minor suit before showing a four-card major, raise and double back. If you can show your major at the one-level, do so. Bid one spade. You can rebid clubs later to pattern out your distribution.

Q. 2 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AK762 ♠ 763 ♠ 8783 ♠

Partner opens the bidding with one no trump. What action do you take?

A - To let partner struggle in one no trump when you have a weak hand with a five-card suit is sadistic. Played in hearts, you will score at least a couple of ruffs in hand, so bid two hearts or transfer into hearts and then pass if that is your style.

Q. 3 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AVoid 109743 ♠ Q103 ♠ AQJ93 ♠

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

Pass Pass 1♥ Pass

What do you bid now?

A - This hand is classic for one of the oldest principles in standard bidding. Jump to three clubs to show your source of tricks and excellent heart support. The jump is a one-round force and guarantees

Q. 4 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

AK98 ♠ AKQ1065 ♠ 10543 ♠

Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one diamond. What action do you take?

A - A matter of style. If you play weak jump overcalls, this hand easily qualifies for a jump to two hearts. These, that merit a heart and trust that partner doesn't play you for a better hand defensively.

Q. 5 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AAQJ10742 ♠ J98 ♠ Vvoid AQ83 ♠

What is your opening bid?

A - With spades as trumps, your hand would produce six tricks. Applying the Rule of Two and Three, that merits a preemptive opening of three spades at this vulnerability, and we see no reason to bid anything else.

Q. 6 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

AA1098 ♠ 7KQ882 ♠ 8A8 ♠

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

Pass 3♠ 7♠

What action do you take?

A - There is no question about getting into the auction, but your long major is not good enough to bid at this level. Double for takeout. That focuses attention on the major suits, and partner should not bid clubs without a very good five-card suit or longer.

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Sampras benefits from rivals' exit

PARIS (R) — The chance of Pete Sampras finishing the year as World No. 1 for a record sixth time was boosted unexpectedly on Friday when his two rivals departed from the Paris Open.

World No. 2 Marcelo Rios was humbled 6-3 6-2 by in-form

Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov in the quarter-finals. The defeat cost the Chilean crucial points in his challenge for top spot.

Ironically, Rios became the only player able to stop Sampras from achieving his goal after world number three Patrick Rafter of Australia announced he was putting an end to his season because of a knee injury.

The U.S. Open champion, who was beaten by unseeded American Todd Martin in the third round, will now miss the season-ending ATP Tour world championship in Hanover, Germany later this month.

Sampras himself is not in the best shape. On Thursday evening, he had to fight for two hours against little known Frenchman Jerome Golmard before reaching the last eight in three sets.

The American needed massage three times on court because of back problems and stayed a long time with the doctors

after his match.

Sampras plays big-serving Australian Mark Philippoussis in the quarter-finals later on Friday.

Rios will be in action at home in Santiago next week while Sampras could still play in either Stockholm or Moscow.

But Rios said next week did not matter. "Hanover is the place where it's going to happen anyway," he said.

Rios was never in contention against Kafelnikov. The Russian, runner-up in Stuttgart, Germany, last week, was in control throughout as the Chilean made many unforced errors.

As moody as ever, Rios threw his racket to the ground, kicked the ball a couple of times and was jeered throughout by the Parisian crowd.

His main achievement was saving a match point before Kafelnikov finished him with an ace.

Rafter's announcement was expected after the knee injury hampered him for the past couple of weeks.

"My left knee is a problem that I've been aware of for a while and it's something that comes and goes. The doctor suggested rehabilitation for the next few weeks."

Rusedski through at Paris Open

PARIS (AFP) — Britain's Greg Rusedski, still hoping to qualify for the ATP Championships in Hanover later this month, powered past Magnus Gustafsson of Sweden in straight sets at the Paris Indoor Open on Friday to set up a potentially explosive semi-final showdown with Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia.

Rusedski, seeded 13th, was in magnificent form and left Gustafsson looking shellshocked after hammering down 16 aces in a no-nonsense 6-3, 6-2 victory which took just 52 minutes.

It was the British left-hander's third win in as many matches against the 33-year-old Swede, who was making his sixth appearance in the tournament.

Kafelnikov earlier outplayed World No. 2 Marcelo Rios of Chile by the same scoreline.

Rusedski has now won 27 matches indoors this season — more than any other player on the ATP Tour.

Ruling on Faisali-Qadissieh deadlock expected Monday

By Aileen Bannayan

AMMAN — A high-ranking Jordan Football Association (JFA) official said a final ruling on the Faisali-Qadissieh controversy was expected in Monday's regular session.

"The federation will meet with the concerned parties in the coming 48 hours and issue a final decision Monday," JFA secretary Mohammad Hamdan told the Jordan Times Friday.

Hamdan declined comment on whether the Premier League championship, which has been on hold since Oct. 25, would resume or be cancelled for the season.

The controversy was sparked by Al Faisali's walk-out midway through their Oct. 25 match against Al Qadissieh after the referee ruled their goal offside, and the subsequent assault on match referees by their fans and administrators.

That was followed by the JFA decision to suspend the matches while ruling that the match be replayed — a ruling which further complicated matters.

Tideholders Al Wihdat announced withholding their participation, while

Al Qadissieh refused the replay citing JFA rules that stipulate a withdrawing team is considered loser by a 3-0 score.

During Thursday's JFA's meeting, headed by HRH Prince Abdullah and Vice President Saleh Irsheidat, the association expressed concern that further delaying the matches can only have a negative impact on the clubs and the national team in general.

Al Qadissieh spokesman Khalid Zayid had earlier stressed his clubs position saying replaying the match "is an unjust decision."

"[Football] rules are very clear. Any team withdrawing from any match should be considered the loser," Zayid told the Jordan Times.

He added that Al Qadissieh would ask the JFA to seek the ruling of foreign football experts and might request a recommendation from Arab or Asian Football Federations.

Al Wihdat Vice President Hilmi Shalabi also called the JFA's replay ruling "inappropriate."

"The decision demonstrates that anybody can beat up referees and get away without tough punishment. How

can we trust the referees when they are scared to take appropriate decisions for fear of players, fans or anyone assaulting them," Shalabi said.

The rapporteur of the Referees Committee Abdul Latif Abdul Majid told the Jordan Times that the five-man panel, formed to look into the issue, failed to come up with a unified stance regarding the legitimacy of the goal and recommended to the JFA the ratification of referee Dirar Tamimi's decision to cancel the goal.

The panel also noted that referee Tamimi did not end the match, but stopped the game following the attack on his colleagues and the walk-out of Al Faisali when he cancelled the match's sole goal.

Excluding the ill-fated Faisali-Qadissieh match, Al Wihdat currently head the standings, one point ahead of Al Faisali with five weeks remaining in the competition which has been continuously postponed throughout the season starting with the strike by clubs over ticket sales allocation and thereafter for each time the national team was regrouped for regional events.

Rafter pulls out of ATP Championships

PARIS (AFP) — World No. 3 Patrick Rafter of Australia on Friday pulled out of the ATP Championships in Hanover later this month after being ordered by doctors to rest his troublesome knee.

U.S. Open champion Rafter, who lost a thrilling three-set marathon in the third round of the Paris Indoor Open to American Todd Martin on Thursday, has been troubled by left knee problems for several months.

"It isn't something that needs surgery. It's a bruised meniscus and it just takes time," he said.

"I've decided to pull out of Hanover because the doctor thinks I need to rest for a couple of weeks. Obviously this is a big disappointment. Everyone wants to play in the Championships. They're the biggest

event of the year. It would have been a good opportunity for me."

Rafter said that he now intended to spend five days in London before flying to his home in Bermuda. He would return to Australia for Christmas and hopefully be fit to play in the Australian Open.

Rafter's withdrawal means that Karol Kucera of Slovakia and Tim Henman of Britain will qualify for the elite eight-player event while Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Britain's Greg Rusedski will battle it out for the final berth.

There are three ATP events next week before the Championships — Stockholm, Santiago and Moscow.

Rusedski and Kafelnikov have both reached the quarter-finals in Paris.

FIFA happy with South Korea's preparations for 2002 World Cup

SEOUL (AFP) — Football's governing body on Friday gave its backing to South Korea's preparations for the 2002 World Cup finals but ruled out communist North Korea hosting matches.

President Kim Dae-Jung, meanwhile, vowed to put full government weight behind efforts to ensure the event is a success as he symbolically started work on a new stadium that will host the first match of the finals.

Antonio Matarrese, a vice-president of FIFA, ended a five-day inspection tour and declared himself "quite satisfied and glad" with South Korean progress.

The delegation, which went on to co-hosts Japan, is to return next March to again assess work.

"While visiting the regional host cities, we had a chance to feel and confirm with our own eyes that the preparation for stadium construction and other matters are progressing very well," Matarrese said.

He called for improvements in parking around stadiums and the "network of small roads which are necessary for speedy flow of incoming and outgoing spectators."

But he added that these were "trivial problems and we believe they can be solved in time."

Matarrese dismissed any chance of North Korea hosting matches, a move the South's soccer leaders have sought to improve ties. The two Koreas have been technically at war since the 1950-53 Korean conflict.

"FIFA decided on co-host-



Dr. Antonio Matarrese (L), Vice President of FIFA, talks with Choi Chang-Shin, General Secretary of the South Korean World Cup organization committee after their press conference in Seoul Nov. 6. Matarrese, a high-ranking official of the world's football governing body, ruled out any possibility of North Korea hosting some of the 2002 World Cup finals, which will be co-hosted by South Korea and Japan as originally scheduled (AFP photo)

ing between South Korea and Japan, not North Korea," he said.

"We want to help North Korea but we can't at this occasion," he said.

South Korea is eager to get North Korea to take part in the 2002 finals, and proposed Pyongyang hosts some matches. It also proposed a joint Korean team, but it has never had a reply.

The head of the Korean Football Association (KFA) Chung Mong-Joon, also a FIFA vice-president, said he hoped to visit the communist state to discuss the two pro-

years as we don't want it to be held during the rainy season," Peter Velappan, general secretary of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), told reporters.

Because June and July are wet in South Korea and Japan, there have been several rumours of a possible rescheduling. But FIFA had said this would pose many problems as the major European and South American leagues would have to be re-organised. South Korea is also to host the Asian Games in Pusan in late 2002.

Velappan emphasised the 2002 World Cup finals will "score many firsts" since it will be the first in Asia and the first to be co-hosted. But the co-hosting has faced much criticism because of problems between the two nations.

Former FIFA president Joao Havelange recently said awarding the finals to Japan and South Korea had been a mistake "forced" upon him.

South Korea plans to build 10 new stadiums in the next three years, although the financial crisis sweeping Asia has depleted South Korean state coffers.

President Kim attended the ground-breaking ceremony for the main stadium in Seoul, which is due to be finished by October 2001 despite delays over funding fears.

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Frenchman Jean Pierre Fontenay drives his Mitsubishi Pajero to victory, on the final day of the UAE Desert Challenge. Fontenay came ahead of fellow French driver Jean Louis Schlessler who won the FIA World Cup for Cross Country rallies on this last event of the series (AFP photo)

Newcastle next on the United hit list

LONDON (AFP) — Ruud Gullit's Newcastle will be fearing the worst when they travel to Old Trafford in the English Premiership on Sunday to face a Manchester United side that has been gorging itself on goals in recent weeks.

On Wednesday, Alex Ferguson's side smashed five goals without reply against visiting Danish side Brondby in the European Champions League, taking their goal tally in the last seven matches to a net-bulging 27.

With former Newcastle striker Andy Cole now flourishing alongside £12.6 million (\$19 million) strike partner Dwight Yorke, United will be confident of racking up a few more goals on Sunday as they bid to leapfrog current leaders Aston Villa at the top of the Premiership table.

Leaders Villa, who have 22 points from their 10 games so far, entertain George Graham's Tottenham at Villa Park on Saturday and United, a point adrift in second, will be ready to take advantage of any slip up by John Gregory's men.

The Old Trafford side had five different goalscorers on Wednesday, indicative of the confidence coursing through

the entire side at the moment, but it is Cole's deadly link-up with Yorke that gives manager Ferguson greatest cause for optimism.

The inveterate 27-year-old is suddenly oozing confidence up front, and, shock of shocks, smiling.

Wednesday's goal summed up the Nottingham-born player's telepathic understanding with Yorke, signed in August from Villa. A neat dummy allowed Yorke to play him through on goal and Cole tipped past a defender before deftly lifting a finish of the highest class over the advancing Brondby goalkeeper.

United are likely to be without one of Wednesday's goalscorers on Sunday. Left-back Phil Neville has a hamstring injury.

Leaders Villa will be hoping new signing Dion Dublin, who completed his 5.75 million pounds move from Coventry on Thursday, can make an immediate impact as they aim to steady the boat after two shock defeats.

Gregory's side are still unbeaten in the league but lost 4-1 at Chelsea in the League Cup 10 days ago and then were knocked out of the UEFA Cup on Tuesday after a 3-1

home defeat by Spanish side Celta Vigo.

They will have their work cut out at home breaking down Graham's Spurs side, who were unlucky to only draw at home to Charlton last time out.

Like Villa, third-placed Arsenal endured a miserable night in Europe in midweek, slumping to a 3-1 defeat to Dynamo Kiev in Ukraine, a result which saw them plummet from top to bottom of their Champions League group.

The Gunners were without captain Tony Adams, Frenchman Nicolas Anelka and Dutch pair Dennis Bergkamp and Marc Overmars through injury in Kiev and Adams, who has a long-standing back problem, is definitely out of Sunday's home game against Everton.

Graf reaches semis

LEIPZIG (R) — Steffi Graf recovered from a slow start to beat French qualifier Anne-Gaëlle Sidot 7-5 6-3 to reach the Leipzig Open women's tournament semi-finals on Friday.

Germany's Graf, back in action after being sidelined for two months following surgery on her right wrist, was made to work by the 19-year-old Sidot.

Sidot, who had upset top seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain in the previous round, broke the former World No. 1 in the opening game.

She was leading 5-4 and serving for the set when she allowed Graf to fight her way back into the match by hitting a backhand long on break point.

Another unforced error by Sidot handed Graf the first set.

The seven-times Wimbledon champion, who has slumped to a modest 22nd in the world, managed the telling break in the tiebreak game of the second set. She then served for the match, sealing victory after 79 minutes when Sidot hit a backhand return long on match point.

Graf, who won in Leipzig from 1990 to 1993 and has never lost a match in the indoor event, plays Belgian Dominique van Roost, the third seed, for a place in Sunday's final. Graf and Van Roost have never met before.

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Israel detains 17 Lebanese in occupied border zone

RACHAYA (AFP) — The Israeli army abducted 17 Lebanese, including six members of its allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia, from the Israeli-occupied border zone in south Lebanon on Friday, police said.

About 40 Israeli soldiers, backed by military vehicles and police dogs, raided the Christian Maronite village of Qlayaa in the eastern sector of the border enclave at dawn, the police said.

Seventeen residents, including six SLA militiamen, were snatched from their homes and taken to the SLA-run Khiam jail in the border enclave and other prisons inside Israel.

The Lebanese detainees were all accused of "collaborating with Lebanese security authorities," they added.

Last Friday, former SLA militiaman Nagib Salman Sallam, 23, was expelled from the enclave after spending two months in Khiam jail.

He had been accused of enrolling six months ago in the SLA upon instructions from Lebanese authorities to recruit a network of government agents in the Israeli-occupied zone.

A day before, Lebanon's military court ordered sentences of up to 15 years in jail against 53 Lebanese convicted of working as Israeli agents, including 36 tried in absentia.

The Israeli spy network, which was accused of gathering information on the Lebanese and Syrian armies as well as guerrillas fighting to end Israel's 20-year occupation of south Lebanon, was dismantled after the defection in July of a former top SLA intelligence official.

About 150 Lebanese have been held for several years without charge or trial in jails in Israel and the border zone where human rights groups, particularly the London-based Amnesty International, repeatedly denounce cases of torture and ill-treatment.

Businessman indicted for visiting Israel

In Beirut meanwhile, authorities on Friday levied another charge in absentia against a Lebanese-American businessman, accusing him of visiting Israel and concluding a trade deal there.

Military Magistrate Raid

Talib said in an indictment that Roger Tamraz violated the rules on the Arab Boycott of Israel when he entered Israel without permission from the Lebanese authorities and struck a commercial deal with the Jewish state.

Lebanon is technically at war with Israel and forbids contacts with it.

Tamraz had previously been sentenced in absentia to three years in jail for collaboration with Israel. That case was based on a reported meeting in Paris between Tamraz and an Israeli diplomat, David Kimche.

The latest indictment was issued following reports published in Lebanese newspapers on Sept. 9, quoting the Israeli newspaper Haaretz that Tamraz had visited Israel and concluded a trade deal with it.

Talib demanded that Tamraz, who lives in the United States, be given an unspecified jail term with hard labour.

Tamraz has been wanted in Lebanon since 1989 for allegedly embezzling up to \$200 million while he was chairman of the Al Mashreq Bank when it went bankrupt during the 1975-90 civil war.



SAILING HOME: A family home is sent sailing from Auckland on a barge along the New Zealand coast giving a new meaning to houseboat on Friday. Choosing a water route to relocate the house saved the shippers the arduous task of trekking overland and dealing with traffic and powerlines (AP photo)

Sudan wants Egyptians to farm land

KHARTOUM (AP) — Sudan's powerful spiritual leader on Friday called on Egyptians to migrate to "millions" to Sudan to cultivate government farm lands left fallow because of scarcity of farmers.

Sudan "invites Egyptians to come in millions to make use of millions of hectares that are not cultivated because Sudan is underpopulated," Hassan Tourabi, who is also the parliament speaker, told a gathering of doctors in Khartoum.

His comments were broadcast by state television. Tourabi has extended

similar invitations in the past but without results. Sudan covers an area of 2.6 million square kilometres, making it Africa's largest country, and its population is estimated at 28 million.

Egypt's area is 1 million square kilometres, but about 90 per cent of its 60 million people live on 5 per cent of the land along the Nile River. The rest is mostly desert.

Tourabi has long maintained that Egyptians are master farmers, reaping the benefit of Nile Valley, the most fertile land in the

world.

He indicated that the Egyptians who take up his offer will be allowed to own lands. But he did not specify the areas where arable land has been left uncultivated.

Egyptian farmers often migrate to other countries in search of work but migration of farmers is not known. In September, Libyan President Muammar Qadhafi also said he will accept 1 million Egyptians to cultivate land watered by a new gigantic irrigation project but it is not known how many went.

Tourabi's comments come

as relations between Egypt and Sudan are at a low point over Egyptian allegations that Sudan supports Islamists seeking to topple the Egyptian government.

Also Friday, Sudanese President Hassan Al Bashir talked on the telephone with Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Reports say the tiny Gulf state is trying to patch up relations between Egypt and Sudan.

The official Sudan News Agency said Al Bashir and Abdullah discussed "security and stability in the region."

Japanese police arrest irate Spiderman

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese police Friday arrested irate French Spiderman Alain Robert for trespass after he scaled the 54-storey Shinjuku Centre in central Tokyo. "I did not understand his French but he seemed to be angry," said a police official. The Shinjuku Centre, one of Tokyo's tallest buildings, is 223 metres high, said the police official, adding that 34-year-old Robert was still being questioned. Robert, nicknamed the Spiderman, has in the last four years scaled a number of the world's highest buildings including Kuala Lumpur's Twin Towers and Paris' Eiffel Tower.

Theft victim: 'Villains are an upstanding lot'

LONDON (AFP) — Businessman David Parkes was upset when he found important papers stolen from his car along with his portable telephone. So he dialled the phone's number, and when the thief surprisingly answered asked him if he had dumped the papers, and if so, where. Being given the information, he recovered the documents from the spA described. "I have changed my view on villains now, they are an upstanding lot," said Parkes, 42, from near Bristol in western England. "I am very, very grateful to him for the directions. And he is more than welcome to keep the phone."

Man 'kidnaps' inflatable doll

WARSAW (AFP) — A 19-year-old man armed with an air pistol stole an inflatable doll from a sex shop Thursday after threatening to kill the saleswoman if she tried to thwart him, police said. The man at first asked the shopkeeper in a southern town of Katowice to wrap up the brown haired doll, which, equipped with a built-in vibrator, was priced at \$80. But instead of paying, he pulled the gun and threatened the woman, then locked her in the shop with his own padlock.

Chastity belt blues for Indian dogs

LUCKNOW (AFP) — Oversexed dogs in the northern Indian city of Lucknow are in for a bitter, and possibly quite painful, disappointment. An animal rights group in the city, opposed to "cruel" forced sterilisation of bitches, has come up with a medieval alternative — canine chastity belts. According to the rights group, Animal Friends, the belt is easy to use, takes a few seconds to fix and causes no discomfort. The group also offers customised chastity belts, following requests from some owners for pointed studs on the belts to act as a further deterrent — should one be needed.

Students rate finding a partner a low priority

WASHINGTON (AFP) — College students rank career achievement as their top priority, far ahead of other goals such as finding a partner, according to a new poll by a consulting group. Four times more students said their "compelling long-term need" was "outstanding success" in their careers (35 per cent) over finding a mate (eight per cent) according to a poll for the accountancy and consulting firm KPMG. Romantic interests also lagged financial security, job fulfillment and balancing work and time off, the survey by KPMG's recruiting website reported.

Baghdad's Rashid Hotel relives days of prosperity

By Maher Chmaytelli
AFP

BAGHDAD — Baghdad's Rashid Hotel is reliving Iraq's prosperous past this week as businessmen and foreign diplomats throng its corridors awaiting deals at the capital's nearby international trade fair.

The hotel's lobby is awash with men in suits discussing deals with Iraq in languages from the four corners of the world.

The telex machine groans under the weight of messages and the telephones never stop ringing. Outside there is a continuous stream of limousines.

The hotel staff are tired but happy. "We're full, it's like it was before," says one, even in the knowledge that it will all end soon.

The trade fair, the like of which has not been seen since U.N. sanctions were imposed eight years ago and which has attracted 66 companies from 30 countries, will end Sunday and with it the business buzz in Hotel Rashid.

Given the latest crisis over

weapons inspections, the hotel is likely to be restricted to the same clients it has seen over the last eight years — journalists and foreign diplomats coming to Baghdad to mediate or sympathise.

Russian ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy did not wait long. During his recent visit here he delighted in wiping his feet on a picture of former U.S. President George Bush engraved on the floor of the hotel's entrance.

The portrait of Bush, who led the international coalition against Iraq in the 1991 Gulf war, bears the legend "The Criminal."

The portrait has been there since 1993, created on the initiative of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's eldest son, Uday, and prompted by a U.S. missile attack that damaged the hotel, killing an employee.

This magnificent 14-storey hotel was built in the heady days of 1983 to be a focus for Baghdad's large international events, but has since then become more famous for a series of misfortunes.

It was from its windows looking onto Baghdad that CNN broadcast the first images of the Gulf war's Operation Desert Storm to the world with the phrase "the skies of Baghdad are lit up."

What followed was a slow deterioration of the hotel's grandeur. As U.N. sanctions began to bite, the restaurants closed, down one by one until only the cafeteria was left open, with a breakfast menu reduced to fried eggs, cheese and mixed salad.

But a respite came in 1996 in the form of the U.N. oil-for-food programme which allows Iraq to sell limited quantities of crude in return for humanitarian supplies and with it foreign delegations in search of contracts.

Two of the restaurants reopened last year and even the cafeteria's breakfast menu has now added the heady choice of cheese omelettes.

But some things have never changed — the brightly dressed doormen in baggy pants and turban and the portrait of Saddam in the hotel's main hallway.

Yemen to try bombing suspects

SANAA (AFP) — A group of recently arrested Yemenis will stand trial for a series of bombings that has rocked southern Yemen, a security official said Friday. "A group of terrorists threw a grenade at a police car last Saturday in Bajda, wounding two police officers," southern Bajda province police chief Ali Hassan Al Atmi was quoted by the Sanaa press as saying.

He did not say how many had been arrested.

Two of the suspects "confessed to the examining magistrate to having carried out a series of bomb attacks to terrorise the population," Atmi said.

Southern Yemen was shaken by a series of bombings in September.

Two people were killed Sept. 23 when TNT hidden in a car in southern Dhaleh province blew up.

Three days earlier, two people were killed and 27 others wounded in a bombing in a market in Aden.

In October, three Yemenis were executed for acts of sabotage in southern Mahra province in November 1996 and possession of explosives and various weapons.

Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh recently said that the attacks were committed by Yemenis "funded by secessionist leaders who caused the war in 1994." The northern government forces won the war while the southern leaders went into exile.

Egyptian policemen transferred after torture allegations

CAIRO (AFP) — Four police officers accused by a human rights group of torturing Coptic Christians in southern Egypt were transferred to administrative posts on Thursday, police sources said.

However, the police denied that anyone had been tortured.

"Interior Minister Habib Al Adly decided on Thursday to transfer two police lieutenant-colonels, a major and a captain to administrative jobs," a police source said.

Hani Jamal, Ashraf Hussein, Islam Mohammad and Mohammad Mansur were accused by the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights (EOHR) of torturing Copts who were rounded up in the village of Al Koshah following the murder of two Copts there in August.

The EOHR issued a report in September detailing accounts from Al Koshah residents who said the officers tortured some of the suspects to extract confes-

sions.

The four were transferred "to prevent them from disrupting the course of the investigation of the murder," the police source said, denying that any of the suspects had been tortured.

The forensic report invalidates reports that 10 Copts had been tortured and states that the scars they have on different parts of their bodies are old," he said.

"Three Copts who are suffering from eye and ear disorders will undergo new medical tests to determine the origin of their sufferings," he said.

The torture allegations were also published last month in Britain's Sunday Telegraph newspaper, which was sued in a Cairo court Monday for \$17 billion over what the suit said was "false information" about the persecution of Christians in Egypt.

Coptic Christians make up nearly five per cent of Egypt's 65 million people, according to official figures.

Ankara praises EU's decision on candidacy

ANKARA (AP) — Turkey's foreign minister on Thursday said the European Union's definition of Turkey as a candidate for membership will pave the way to improved relations between Brussels and Ankara.

"Although wrong assessments by the European Union (EU) persist, with the definition of Turkey by the European Commission (EC) as one of the 12 candidate countries, the road toward developing our relations has opened," Minister Ismail Cem said in a statement.

After the decision in December to exclude Turkey from the first wave of enlargement talks, Turkey put its relations with the 15-member union on hold. Since then, the EU has been trying to patch up the relationship, with several leaders of member countries insisting that Turkey's place is in the union.

The EC released Thursday its first set of regular reports assessing the progress towards EU membership of 12 "candidate" countries, including 10 central and eastern European countries and Cyprus and Turkey.

The EU ambassador to Turkey, Karen Fogg, insisted that the report "did not signal a new status of Turkey, but the confirmation that Turkey is a candidate country." In any case, the report indicated Turkish membership would not come soon.

"The persistent violations of human rights and important deficiencies in the treatment of minorities are causes of concern," the report on Turkey stated.

Turkish authorities are frequently accused of systematically violating human rights, especially in the southeast where Kurdish rebels have been fighting for autonomy since 1984.

Palestinian security chief, top Hamas fugitive share common roots

KHAN YOUNIS REFUGEE CAMP (AP) — One is the hunter, and one is the hunted.

Mohammad Dahlan, chief of Palestinian preventive security in the Gaza Strip, has been handed the daunting task of breaking the Izzeddine Al Qassam brigades, the military wing of the Islamist group Hamas.

Mohammad Deif is a top Hamas military leader, one of the most wanted fugitives in the Palestinian lands, suspected mastermind in a string of bloody attacks on Israelis — and a boyhood neighbour of Dahlan, his new-found nemesis.

Now in their mid-30s, the two grew up in the same refugee camp, went to the same university, earned their fighter's stripes in the same street clashes with Israeli troops.

Shaped by common experience, their lives have always run on some strangely parallel track. Now they share the stage in a drama whose larger outcome could lead to the success or shattering of the new Mideast peace accord.

Israel insists that in exchange for more West

Bank territory, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) must wage all-out war on Islamists who have used suicide bombings to terrorise Israelis and thwart past peace efforts.

That includes tracking down key Hamas leaders like Deif. In demeanour, Dahlan and Deif could hardly be more different.

Dahlan is big, bluff and smooth-spoken; Deif is said to be bookish, reticent and solitary. While Dahlan is a sharp dresser whose confident carriage attracts attention, Deif is described as a master of disguise, a man who can all but disappear in plain sight.

Dahlan is a rising star in Palestinian politics, reportedly impressing U.S. President Bill Clinton when they met during Mideast peace negotiations at a Maryland retreat in October. Deif has clung to the shadows, drifting like smoke through his fugitive's nether world.

Because of that, Dahlan's allegiance lies today with Arafat's PNA, which has chosen to make peace with Israel. Hamas — and Deif — remain dedicated to its destruction.

But Palestinian society puts an overwhelming traditional emphasis on personal connections, village bonds and kinship ties. So the battle lines tend to blur, even in the face of what look like directly conflicting ideologies.

Thus, a straightforward-seeming task — the PNA must root out Hamas — is in fact enormously complicated by cultural factors.

The face of the enemy, after all, is so like that of a brother.

Khan Younis refugee camp, named for the scruffy Gaza Strip town that surrounds it, is a warren of narrow, sandy streets lined with cement-block hovels. Although it in many ways resembles Gaza's seven other refugee camps, its isolation amid lonely stretches of sand dunes and its stifling provincial atmosphere make the others seem almost cosmopolitan by comparison.

Even by strict Gaza standards, public mores are con-

servative; women wear long enveloping black robes, and none ventures out without a head scarf. Barefoot boys leap among the rubble, kicking a battered soccer ball.

Graffiti looping across the camp's walls range from the grandiose political to the humbly mundane. "No peace without our Jerusalem" says one. Next to it is a hand-scribbled advertisement for a camp hairdresser.

Recent years have wrought some changes. When it rained, Khan Younis' streets used to run with raw sewage; today the water system is being upgraded. There is a new housing project of pale-yellow apartment buildings, a soon-to-open hospital.

But some things are much as they were when Mohammad Dahlan and Mohammad Deif were growing up in Khan Younis, their family homes separated by only a few trash-strewn streets.

The camp still sprawls right up to the barbed-wire-topped perimeter wall of the Jewish settlement of Gush Katif. Israeli soldiers man a nearby military checkpoint. The camp is still a prime recruiting ground for groups

like Hamas and Islamic Jihad, turning out foot soldiers and top leaders alike.

At least a half dozen of the 30 Palestinian Islamists whose arrest was demanded by Israel in early November are from Khan Younis. It was the hometown of Hassan Salameh, the former No. 2 in Izzeddine Al Qassam who oversaw a series of deadly bombings before Israel shot and captured him two years ago.

Neither Dahlan nor Deif have lived in the camp for years, but both still have relatives there. However, none would speak to journalists or allow their photographs to be taken.

Acquaintances and associates of one or both men, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that as youngsters, the two moved in separate but overlapping circles. They attended the same elementary school, but at different times of the day — like many in Gaza, where schools are so crowded that students go to classes in shifts.

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